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STUDIES: INDIAN AND ISLAMIC

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BY

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TO SIR GEOFFREY DE MONTMORENCY

I dedicate these pages in token of my admiration and gratefulness to him

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FOREWORD

IN publishing these papers in book form I have been moved thereto by one main consideration: namely, to give them a more permanent form than can possibly be theirs in the fleeting guise of contributions to the daily or periodical press. One and all, they deal with questions Indian and Islamic—questions of more or less enduring value and interest.

In 1920 the University of Calcutta published my English translation of the first volume of Von Kremer's *Culturgeschichte des Orients*.[1] To that translation I now add, in these studies, the translations of four chapters of the second volume of that scholarly work.[2]

In my Islamic studies—I have recounted the story of Muslim civilization in its various aspects—in my Indian studies the numerous phases of Indian life and politics.

Both these studies, I trust, will prove of interest—especially as, in these days, Islam is apparently confronting a new career and India is entering on a new adventure.

No understanding of the present or intelligent anticipation of the more or less immediate future, is conceivable or possible without a correct appreciation of the past. The present Islamic movements will not yield their secrets without an understanding of the Islamic past, nor can Indian problems ever be soluble without some intelligent knowledge of past and present Indian feelings and sentiments.

In these pages I have tried to portray the past of the Muslim world and to describe its present position.

[1] *The Orient under the Caliphs*, Calcutta University Press, 1920.

[2] Chapters xiii, xiv, xv, xvi of this book.

I have one pleasant duty now to perform : namely, to offer my most grateful thanks to Mr. H. B. Hannah for his kindness in revising the proofs and giving me his valuable suggestions.

S. K. B.

Khuda Bukhsh Library,
Patna Junction.
22*nd February*, 1926.

STUDIES: INDIAN AND ISLAMIC

I

MOHAMED—THE PROPHET OF GOD

WE shall do honour to our Prophet, not in the old, traditionary style which contented itself with fairy-tales and unattested reports, but in a manner more in accord with the critical and progressive spirit of the age. We propose to take our stand on the solid ground of facts testified to by a cloud of witnesses, facts which none can question or deny. And the historical Mohamed is certainly a figure of towering intellect, of gigantic achievement and of abiding interest. Why need we resort to legends or fictions or unverified assertions?

The adoption of a critical method when enquiring into the life of the Prophet is, to my mind, an unmistakable indication of the new spirit of the times. It betokens an advance in the direction of liberalism. It holds out promise of a still greater reform and advancement, in the near future, along the lines of free enquiry and historical criticism. It is a matter of joy to us that we are fast shaking off unreasonable prejudices, born of ignorance, and, more still, it is a splendid refutation of the charge, so persistently and maliciously made by non-Muslim writers, that Islam is stationary, stereotyped, hostile to progress. But the whole history of Islam gives the lie to this charge. Islam, indeed, has never been such. Nor is there anything in its religious system which, even remotely, is calculated to retard progress.

On the contrary, as I have always maintained, the downfall of the Muslims and their Empire was occasioned, first and foremost, by their indifference to and neglect of those eternal principles of justice, love, righteousness which Islam enjoined and inculcated, and which its great founder amply illustrated and emphasised in his own dealings at home and abroad. We will not deny—and our admission will

not in the least detract from the greatness of the Prophet—that contemporaneously with him, a new spiritual light was falling upon Arabia, and that there were men, his contemporaries (one, at least, almost a kinsman of his), who, dissatisfied with the existing religion of their country, looked ahead and around for something more liberal and more rational, something more consonant with spiritual needs, than the gross fetishism which was all that their country offered to them. But what was the nature and extent of this movement? Imperfect and fragmentary as our knowledge is, we are not in a position definitely to determine its scope or to assess its worth. We must, therefore, abandon the solution of the problem as to how far Mohamed was affected by the movement around him, or by the fact of the existence of Judaism and Christianity in the Arabian Peninsula.[1] But influenced he undoubtedly was, and there are clear indications of such an influence in the Qur'an. That ideas, at variance with the prevailing religion of the Arabs, were afloat at the time of the birth, infancy, youth, manhood of the Prophet, it would be idle to deny. The Pre-Islamite poetry incessantly refers to the light of the monk guiding the wayfarer in the desert, and the Qur'an often refers to Jewish and Biblical legends.

But who was it that within a brief span of mortal life called forth a nation, strong, compact, invincible, out of loose, disconnected, ever-warring tribes, animated by a religious fervour and enthusiasm unknown in the history of the world before, and set before it a system of religion and a code of morals marked by wisdom, sanity and sweet reasonableness? Who was it—it was none other than Mohamed, the Prophet of God. He may have caught the fire from his few enlightened countrymen; he may have been influenced by the Christians and Jews, but the destruction of paganism and the building-up of Islam belongs pre-eminently to him and to him alone.

It was he who launched the new faith on its world-wide career. It was he who attacked heathenism in its very stronghold, its cherished sanctuary, at Mekka, the central point of Arabian idolatry.

[1] Geiger, *What has Mohamed borrowed from Judaism?* Wright, *Early Christianity in Arabia.* The writer has a good deal of information to give, but he is very prejudiced against the Prophet.

Professor De Goeje has told us in a remarkable paper how the prophetic call presented itself to Mohamed. And whether we accept or reject his views, it is clear beyond doubt that the idea that he was the Prophet of God was born, and reborn, was formulated and abandoned, times without number, before it assumed final shape, before it took definite hold of Mohamed. The process was gradual, but nevertheless it was steady. Not that Mohamed ever doubted his mission, but he felt the magnitude of the issue, and, at times, shrank from the life and death struggle, in which the announcement of the new revelation would necessarily involve him. He felt, at times, uneasy and uncertain whether he would be able successfully to face the storm which the new religion was bound to raise.

His countrymen he knew, and he knew well enough that the old religion was the bond which united them with their ancestors, and linked them with their history and tradition, and even appealed to their less pure motives, the love of gain and the love of power, for it brought to them riches and influence alike.

All this Mohamed knew, and hence his hesitation. But the light dawned upon him, and the inner voice spoke unto him, and the decision was formed; a decision firm and irrevocable, a decision for all time. The whole history of the Prophet is an eloquent commentary on the genuineness of this conviction. Battling against the whole force of his country, arrayed against him, he stood undaunted, unshaken in his resolve. Is there one single instance of lapse from the position thus taken up? The most recent historian, Prince Caetani, has completely discredited the alleged lapse of the Prophet, involved in the acknowledgment of the three idols, as intermediaries between man and Allah, and has rejected the whole story as utterly void of truth.

No consideration could induce him to give up that which he considered as a duty entrusted to him by the most High, the duty of proclaiming Monotheism, in its undefiled purity, and of bringing back his erring countrymen, nay the erring world to the path of true faith. Could anything but a conviction of the truth of his mission have sustained him in that terrible struggle?

Even European writers concede that until the celebrated Hegira to Medina they have no fault to find with him;

in fact, they have nothing but unbounded admiration for him and his beliefs, for his method of preaching, and the spirit in which he fought for his cause. They seem to think that a change for the worse came over him when he found himself in possession of power. Is there any truth or substance in this charge?

When enthroned as spiritual and temporal chief, what did he do to justify the most distant suggestion that he deteriorated in virtue or departed from the path of rectitude? Did he change his mode of living? Did he surround himself with the pomp of power? Did he keep a retinue of body-guards, or did he indulge in any one of those outward manifestations of earthly glory with which the monarchs of the earth, ancient and modern, have loved to surround themselves? Did he amass wealth, or leave a large fortune behind? In fact in no one single respect did he change. Power notwithstanding, and stupendous power, too, for he exercised a power which the greatest of monarchs might have envied; he remained to the last, simple unostentatious, free from pride, living with his people, with a noble self-effacement and a shining self-sacrifice rarely to be seen in life.

But it is so difficult for a European to understand the Oriental's attitude towards life and religion. With the Oriental, every act of his has a religious bearing, a religious significance. His whole life—from cradle to grave—is one series of religious performances. There is no sharp dividing-line between religion and politics. There is no such thing as "give unto Cæsar what is Cæsar's and unto God what is God's"—Cæsar is but a representative of God and obedience to him is obedience to God. Mohamed was Cæsar and Pope in one. He had not only to regulate the ritual, frame religious ordinances, direct the worship of his followers, but he had also to attend to their material wants, to guide their political destiny.

And what Prophet of Israel from Samuel to Isaiah was not a maker of kings and constitution? At Mekka his sphere of activity was necessarily narrow and confined—at Medina, the slow march of events added to his prophetic office the arduous duties of the head of the state. It was not a purely ideal code of ethics and morals that he was called upon to administer, but a code workable in daily life, and in conformity with the existing moral standard of the age and the people

among whom he lived. The problems of statesmanship and the problems of religion are as widely apart as the poles.

He would have failed most egregiously if he had dealt with the political problems in the spirit of a visionary, in the fashion of an idealist. Take for instance his attitude towards the Jews. Could we, in the light of the facts that we do know, censure him for his attitude towards them? Modern statesmanship would, perhaps, have taken a far less merciful view than the Prophet did. He tried his uttermost to placate them, but they would not be placated. They would not even remain neutral, but they took up an attitude of positive, aggressive hostility. They formed alliances with his enemies, and they even secretly helped them. Was he to let them alone to destroy what he was painfully and laboriously building up?

No statesmanship would have permitted or indicated any other course than the one adopted by Mohamed.

Take again his triumphal entry into Mekka. What a glorious instance of forbearance! Arabia lay prostrate at his feet, and Mekka, the stronghold of opposition, was entirely at his mercy. Did he, then, show a spirit of revenge? And could he not, if he had so willed, have cut off the heads of every one there—those implacable enemies of his—who gave him no quarter, who forced him to leave his native land to seek shelter elsewhere, who held him up to scorn and ridicule, who persecuted him with a rancour and bitterness which was at once cruel, fierce and heart-rending.

But the personal element never entered into his actions —not once. He rejected every token of personal homage, and declined all regal authority, and when the haughty chiefs of the Quraishites appeared before him, he asked :—

"What can you expect at my hands?"

"Mercy, O generous brother."

"Be it so; you are free," he exclaimed. His simplicity, his humanity, his frugality, his forbearance, his earnestness, his steadfastness, his firmness in adversity, his meekness in power, his humility in greatness, his anxious care for animals, his passionate love for children, his unbending sense of fairness and justice—is there another instance in the history of the world where we have the assemblage of all these virtues woven into one character?

After centuries of perversion of facts and suppression of

truth, the figure of Mohamed stands aloft to-day, extorting admiration from and commanding the reverence of the non-Muslim world. He is no longer a neurotic patient suffering from epilepsy, but a man of tremendous character and unyielding will. He is no longer a self-seeking despot ministering to his own selfish ends, but a beneficent ruler shedding light and love around him. He is no longer an opportunist, but a Prophet with a fixed purpose, undeviating in his constancy. All this Europe has now acknowledged, and acknowledged freely. We have the appreciative works of Higgins, Davenport, Bosworth-Smith, Carlyle, in English; Krehl's and Grimme's in German.[1] There are other scholarly works too, but they are not quite free from those prejudices which, at one time, were the stock-in-trade of Christendom.

I will refer here to the tribute paid by Dr. Gustav Weil to the founder of Islam.

"Mohamed set a shining example[2] to his people. His character was pure and stainless. His house, his dress, his food—they were characterised by a rare simplicity. So unpretentious was he that he would receive from his companions no special mark of reverence, nor would he accept any service from his slave which he could do himself. Often and often was he seen in the market purchasing provisions; often and often was he seen mending his clothes in his room, or milking a goat in his court-yard. He was accessible to all and at all times. He visited the sick and was full of sympathy for all. Unlimited was his benevolence and generosity, as also was his anxious care for the welfare of the community. Despite innumerable presents which from all quarters unceasingly poured in for him—he left very little behind, and even that he regarded as State property."

But if Mohamed, as a man, stands as a peak of humanity, his work, no less, is strong with the strength of immortality. True, the political power of Islam has ebbed away, but its spiritual power is as young and vigorous to-day as it was when first launched on its wondrous, world-wide career. In India, in Africa, in China the Muslim missionaries have won laurels. They have succeeded signally, and succeeded where

[1] I must mention here the scholarly work of Tor Andre, *Die Person Muhammeds*, Stockholm, 1918.

[2] Khuda Bukhsh, *History of the Islamic People*, p. 27. This is an English translation of Weil's *Geschichte der Islamitischen Völker*.

Christianity, with all its wealth and organisation, has failed most hopelessly. But its success has been confined not only to backward races. Has it not secured proselytes even in cultured Europe ?

And what is the secret of its success ? The secret consists in its remarkable freedom from the fetters of priestcraft ; freedom from the fetters of embarrassing ritual and bewildering articles of faith. Islam is the simplest of all revealed religions, and it is, therefore, a religion compatible with the highest as well as the lowest grade of civilisation. Its simplicity is attractive and appealing alike to the man in the street as to the philosopher in the closet. Gœthe fell into raptures over the Qur'an, and Gibbon saw in it a glorious testimony to the unity of God. Belief in one God, and belief in Mohamed as the Prophet of God—such is the quintessence of our faith. This theoretical belief, however, is allied with a principle of infinite grace and wisdom ; namely, that it is not mere faith in the theoretical belief but purity of life and honesty of purpose, sympathy with the afflicted, and love of our fellow being ; it is the conjunction of the two, the theoretical and the practical, which ensures salvation. This is a lesson which we have forgotten, and this is the lesson which must needs be taught if we would make ourselves worthy of the great faith we profess.

The practical, after all, is more important than the theoretical. True worship need not be limited to the chanting and singing of hymns and the telling of beads. There is as much worship, perhaps truer worship, in developing our faculties, in discharging our duties, as in the silent devotion of cloistered meditation. It is this side of religion which Islam has brought clearly to light, and it is this side which we must now cultivate more and more, if we would win the prizes of life and come out triumphant in the terrible struggle for existence which is the most distressing feature of our modern civilisation.

"Among us, Europeans," says Pierre Loti,[1] "it is commonly accepted as a proven fact that Islam is merely a religion of obscurantism, bringing in its train the stagnation of nations, and hampering them in that march to the unknown which we call 'progress'. Yet such an attitude shows not only an absolute ignorance of the teaching of the Prophet,

[1] Loti, *Egypt*, pp. 72–73.

but a blind forgetfulness of the evidence of history. The Islam of the earlier centuries evolved and progressed with the nations, and the stimulus it gave to men in the reign of the ancient Caliphs is beyond all question. To impute to it the present decadence of the Muslim world is altogether too puerile. The truth is that nations have their day, and to a period of glorious splendour succeeds a time of lassitude and slumber. It is a law of nature. And then one day some danger threatens them, stirs them from their torpor and they awake. This immobility of the countries of the Crescent was once dear to me. If the end is to pass through life with the minimum of suffering, disdaining all vain striving, and to die entranced by radiant hopes, the Orientals are the only wise men. But now *that greedy nations beset them on all sides their dreaming is no longer possible. They must awake, alas!*"

And do not the signs of the times unequivocally point to their awakening?

What did Mohamed bring to the world, and wherein lies his immortal service to humanity?

To a people steeped in the grossest form of fetishism he brought a pure and uncompromising monotheism, belief in one God, the Creator of the Universe. And, indeed, this gift was meant for the whole of mankind. It is an error to suppose, as it has been supposed by some European writers, that originally Islam was meant for Arabia and his own people alone. The *Sura Fatcha* speaks of the Lord of the Universe, and it is impossible to imagine that the Lord of the Universe ever intended his light for the guidance and illumination of only a small fraction of humanity. There is not one single passage in the Qur'an which warrants the conclusion that Islam was addressed to the Arabs only. Facts, indeed, point the other way. To us, monotheism might seem commonplace enough, but it was not so when Mohamed delivered it to the world. By the side of the corrupt religion of the Arabs and the strange perversions of Christianity it shone with all the lustre and brilliance of a newly-discovered truth. To preach monotheism, such as that of Islam, to a world such as that in which Mohamed lived, was an instance of rare courage and heroism. And it was a work which could never have succeeded without divine light, and help and support. Its success, more than anything else, is a convincing proof of its divine origin. But with this most valued gift he bestowed another, of no less

importance in the history of human belief and human morals. He awakened in man the idea of responsibility to his Creator. To the Pre-Islamic Arab it was the immediate present which was of importance and of real consequence. He cared not for the past, nor did he show any interest in the future. Like the pagans of yore, his life was one continual orgy, undisturbed by any serious thought, or unrelieved by any care for the morrow. Mohamed opened the eyes of humanity to the fact that man, as a rational being, endowed with the gift of understanding, was a responsible being, fully accountable to the Almighty for his deeds and misdeeds. What a tremendous step forward this meant for mankind! It is impossible for us fully to realize the importance of this doctrine, this article of faith. Man, henceforward, became a moral being. He was, so to speak, born again, and born with a conscience, that inward judge whose vigilance none can evade, and from whose judgment there is no escape.

Nor can we forget the sublime idea of brotherhood in faith which he, for the first time, introduced into the world. All Muslims were brothers. There was to be no wall of division, no difference founded on the score of nationality, and no distinction begotten of colour. Islam truly realized "the parliament of man, the federation of the world". I am not insensible to the fact that it was far too beautiful a scheme to last for any length of time. But nevertheless it was a splendid achievement. It was a beautiful ideal to aim at, to strive for, to live up to. For the Muslim the whole world was his home, entire humanity his kinsmen.

This broad and liberal doctrine found its counterpart in the splendid democracy which Islam set up. The head of the State and the Church was a popular nominee with very clear duties and very distinct obligations.

Read the inaugural speeches of Abu Bakr and Yazid III—documents whose value is inestimable on a gold basis. Nothing like it has ever been realised in the East, and Europe itself has hardly any example to cite of so perfect a democracy as was the one established by Islam. True, it was short-lived, but its existence, however brief, is a crowning glory to Islam. A new view was opened, a fresh direction was given, a new starting-point was made—the whole past was obliterated, a new Arabia arose, and a new Arabian nationality was summoned into existence to take its place in the history of

the world, and to hold aloft the torch of monotheism to guide erring humanity to the path of the true faith.

Glory to Mohamed for the light and illumination, for the joy and comfort and consolation which he brought to sad suffering humanity.

Mohamed's Call to Prophetship[1]

In the truth of his mission as the Prophet of God Mohamed believed whole-heartedly. So firm and deep-rooted was this conviction that nothing could shake or dislodge it. Long before he came to power he had attained this conviction—a conviction which was shared by many, and some, to be sure, of no mean rank and position. How did he come by it? A period of severe strain and excitement preceded his *début*.

The recognition of the one, all-powerful Creator of the Universe who wishes that mankind should serve him, who has fixed a splendid reward for those who carry out his command in purity of heart and steadfastness of purpose, and a terrible punishment for those who neglect and disregard it; the conviction that the Day of Judgment was near at hand, and that his tribesmen could not escape verdict and judgment if they failed to accept the true faith in time; the oft-recurring question whether he might not himself have to step forward as the Preacher of repentance; and the doubt whether he, nervous of temperament as he was, would be able to stand the ridicule and contempt of his coreligionists—all this had brought him to a frame of mind akin to despair. Often and often had he heard himself giving expression in passionate language to the thoughts filling his soul, and he was seized with a dreadful terror that he was possessed of a demon who spoke out through him.

Fasts and prayers brought no solution to him, nor did solitary strolls. To rid himself of this terrible mental anguish he even thought of putting an end to his life. Then, all at once, there came to him the Call which set clearly before him what he was to do.

How did this Call present itself? Tabari, I, 1153, has the following tradition. Abu Kuraib has related to us that Waki

[1] Translated from the German of Prof. De Goeje in the first volume of *Nöldeke-Festschrift*, pp. 1–5.

has said on the authority of Ali Ibn-ul-Mubarik, on the authority of Yahya Ibn Abi Kathir, who said: I asked Abu Salama as to the first that was revealed of the Qur'an. He said: the first that was revealed was "O, thou Enwrapped One" (Sura 74). I said: People say, however, that the first words revealed were: Read in the name of thy Lord who has created thee (Sura 96). He replied: I asked Jabir Ibn Abdullah who said: I shall only relate to thee what the Messenger of God has related to us. I had retired, said the Prophet, for devotion, to Hira, and when I had finished, I came down, and lo! I heard a voice. I looked to the right and I saw nothing, I looked to the left and I saw nothing, I looked ahead and I saw nothing. I looked backward and I saw nothing—then I lifted my head and I saw something. Then I came to Khadija and said: Wrap me up and pour water upon me. She covered me up and poured cold water upon me. Then was revealed—O thou enwrapped in thy mantle. (See note 3 to p. 3 of Rodwell's translation of the Qur'an.)

The "something" which Mohamed saw, is described in another tradition, which is also to be found in Ibn Ishaq, and which, adorned and embellished as it is with other legends, yet retains the main outline of the original tradition. I borrow from it the following words put into the mouth of the Prophet: I came rushing down, out of a rock, with the determination of putting an end to my life and thereby securing peace at last. But when I was about midway I heard a voice from heaven saying, O Mohamed! thou art the Messenger of God, and I am Gabriel. I raised my head towards heaven, and I saw Gabriel in the form of a man (at prayer). He said: O Mohamed! thou art the Prophet of God, and I am Gabriel. I remained standing looking at him—altogether forgetting what I had resolved upon, and moved neither backward nor forward.

I began to turn my face in various directions, and indeed to whichever side I turned I saw him. Neither advancing nor retreating, I stood fixed to the ground until Khadija sent out her messenger to look for me, and the messenger came to Mekka and returned home, while I stood rooted to the spot. Then he (Gabriel) disappeared, and I returned home to my family (at the foot of Hira).

Two passages in the Qur'an prove that this account rests in the main on truth. Sura 81, Verses 15 *et sqq.*: "And I

swear by the stars of retrograde motion, which move swiftly and hide themselves away, and by the night when it cometh darkening on, and by the dawn when it clears away the darkness by its breath, that verily this is the word of an illustrious Messenger, Powerful with the Lord of the Throne, of established rank, obeyed by angels, faithful also to his trust, your compatriot is not one possessed by Jinn ; *for he saw him in the clear horizon* : nor doth he keep back heaven's secrets, nor doth he teach the doctrine of a cursed Satan."

And Sura 53, Verses 1 *et sqq.* : " By the stars when they set, your compatriot erreth not, nor doth he go astray, neither speaketh he from mere impulse. Verily the Qur'an is no other than a revelation revealed to him : One terrible in power taught it him, endued with understanding. With even balance stood he, and he was in the highest point of the horizon : then came he nearer and approached closely, and was at the distance of two bows, or even closer—and he revealed to his servant what he revealed—His heart falsified not what he saw : will ye then dispute with him as to what he saw ?"

In reviewing Dr. V. Pautz's " *Muhammeds Lehre von der offenbarung quellenmässig untersucht* " in *Pheologisch tijdschrift*, 1899, I wrote : " Dr. Pautz and many with him have looked upon this phenomenon as an hallucination. But the simple, straightforward manner in which this event is related in the Qur'an and in the tradition alike throw a great deal of doubt upon the correctness of the view set forth by Dr. Pautz. I hazarded an opinion long ago that Mohamed saw a hazy shadow of his own self, similar to the phantom seen on the ' Brocken '. If the observer finds himself between the low-standing sun and a bank of clouds he sometimes finds his own shadow projected upon the latter enormously enlarged and generally surrounded by a coloured circle which we call an aureole or a halo of glory.[1] It appears that Mohamed noticed this apparition early in the evening—a fact which would explain the anxiety of Khadija. It would also explain how the man who was timid by nature and who only slowly and gradually became conscious of his mission, and who was well-nigh on the point of despair as to how he was to fulfil his destiny—how, such a man, suddenly stepped courageously forward, strengthened and fixed in his innermost conviction that the voice which urged him onward to announce, with

[1] Compare Symonds' *Life of Cellini*, p. xxi, note.—*Tr.*

becoming dignity, the revelation of God, was the voice which came from above."

A colleague of mine to whom I had sent a copy of this article wrote to me: "There is much to say in favour of your explanation of Mohamed's hallucination, and it appears to me to be a very good account of the various versions of the story. If I still entertain any doubt it is to be ascribed to the fact that your argument fails in one important element; namely, in the proof that such phenomena as are observed in the misty Brocken have been observed in the sunny neighbourhood of Mekka. Perhaps such is the case in the 'land of mirage'. My doubt is due, to a certain extent, to my want of knowledge."

I regret that I am unable to supply the desired element. As for the "phantom seen on the Brocken" (*Brockengespenst*) I find the following in Bädeker:—

When the rising or setting sun stands at the same altitude as the Brocken, and on the opposite side down in the valleys mists gather which rise along the Brocken, whilst the Brocken itself, free from the mists, stands between the mist and the sun, the sun will throw the shadow of the Brocken, with all that may happen to be on it, on this bank of mist, on which gigantic figures are formed which soon grow smaller and smaller as the mist comes nearer or recedes further and further. The phantom is rare, and it occurs about once every month.

In the description of the hazy figure in the Qur'an we find the nearest approach to the phenomenon just described. Probably this phenomenon is of extremely rare occurrence at Hira. It may also have taken place in the morning, which would better fit in with the story, according to which Mohamed saw it while wandering about in the hills after a dream that had frightened him overnight.

Mohamed could have had no idea of such optical illusion. For him what he saw was a divine phenomenon which announced to him what he had already in his heart: he was the messenger of God to his people. In great excitement he returned home. Wrap me up! wrap me up! he called out to Khadija and then he had one of those overpowering nervous fits with which he was henceforward attacked each time that he was supposed to have heard the voice of God in his heart. Unconscious, in this condition, he never was. The fits

were the outward manifestations of inward, mental struggle antecedent to spiritual revelation. No sooner was the struggle over than he recovered himself and uttered the revelation. The first revelation in all probability is Sura 74: O thou enwrapped in thy mantle! Arise and warn! And thy Lord—magnify him! And thy raiment—purify it! And the Abomination—flee it! And bestow not favours that thou mayest receive again with increase; and for thy Lord wait thou patiently.

With the belief in the certainty of his divine mission—a heavy load was off his mind. He was rid for ever of the thought that he was possessed of the devil. Certain it is that the attacks with which Mohamed suffered were not of the nature of epilepsy (*cf.* Müller, *Der Islam*, p. 56, note 1). It is also very much to be doubted whether he had these attacks before his prophetic mission. I cannot accept Sprenger's assertion that Mohamed was hysterical.[1] The picture of the Prophet, such as we know it, with his more than twenty years of unresting activity, is certainly not a picture which corresponds to that of one suffering from neurasthenia.

We find in him that sober understanding which distinguished his fellow tribesmen: dignity, tact, and equilibrium; qualities which are seldom found in people of morbid constitution: self-control in no small degree. Circumstances changed him from a Prophet to a Legislator and a Ruler; but for himself he sought nothing beyond the acknowledgment that he was Allah's Apostle, since this acknowledgment includes the whole of Islam. He was excitable, like every true Arab, and in the spiritual struggle which preceded his call this quality was stimulated to an extent that alarmed even himself; but that does not make him a visionary. He defends himself, by the most solemn asseveration, against the charge that what he had seen was an illusion of the senses. Why should we not believe him? [2]

[1] Compare Krehl's *Mohamed*, pp. 52 *et sqq.*—*Tr.*

[2] Nicholson, *Lit. Hist. of the Arabs*, p. 179; Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. II, p. 327.—*Tr.*

II

ARABIAN POETRY

PROFESSOR NICHOLSON has laid the students of Oriental learning under many obligations. His *History of Arabic Literature* is a monument of industry; his monograph on *Sufism*, a marvel of insight and illumination; his translation of Iqbal's *Israrkhudi*, an achievement of enduring fame. To these many gifts he has added one more, of equal and abiding interest, in his charming little volume of Eastern Prose and Poetry.

This booklet ranges over the entire field of Arabic and Persian literature, and embodies the finest and sweetest flowers of Oriental genius. Further, it certainly attests Professor Nicholson's delicate and discriminating taste. The only fault that we find with it is that it is much too small, and slaketh not the thirst of a true lover of Eastern literature. Professor Nicholson will some day, I trust, give us a richer and a more ample selection from those books which in the language of John Milton "are the precious life-blood of master-spirits treasured up for a life beyond life".

I shall here confine myself to Arab Poetry only. Apart from its poetic value—grace and elegance, naturalness combined with art, simplicity with refined sensibility, ancient Arab poetry has a great historic importance. It is the only source of light we possess wherewith to explore the darkness that broods over those early days of Arab history which refuse to yield their entire secret to the curiosity and diligence of the student. Sir Charles Lyall, to whom Professor Nicholson dedicates this volume, has called attention to this aspect of Arab Poetry, and in his translations of *Ancient Arabian Poetry* and the *Mufaddhiliyat* the reader will find a rich compendium of Arab History. Not merely are great stormy events recorded, but the entire social life is reflected in all its simplicity and picturesqueness.

Listen to *Murra of Shaiban*. In one of the oldest Arabic poems that has come down to us he says :—

If war thou hast wrought and brought on me,
No laggard I with arms outworn,
Whate'er betide, I make to flow
The baneful cups of death at morn.
When spear-heads clash, my wounded man
Is forced to drag the spear he stained.
Never I reck, if war must be
What destiny hath preordained.
Donning war's harness, I will strive
To fend from me the shame that sears,
Already I thrill and my lust is roused
For the shock of the horsemen against the spears !

Almost invariably the ancient poets begin a typical ode by recalling a love romance and describing its scene—the spot where the bard's mistress had once camped with her folk, until they again set forth on their wanderings. This found imitators in later times, but it requires no very great acumen to distinguish the genuine from the counterfeit. The original Arab poetry of the desert, unadorned, unaffected, wells up from the heart and flows with perfect, natural ease ; while the poetry of the later Caliphs' courts is artificial and lacks spontaneity, speaks with a false accent and in laboured language which neither delight nor stir the heart.

The Arabs, ever true sons of the desert, were never quite at home elsewhere. For all its gorgeous trappings, civilization did not fully wean them from their passion for the desert. Their poetry points to it. Their history proves it. *Maisun*, wife of the Caliph Muawiyah, scorns the palace at Damascus, and sighs for the desert :—

A tent with rustling breezes cool
Delights me more than palace high,
And more the cloak of simple wool,
Than robes in which I learned to sigh.
The crust I ate beside my tent
Was more than this fine bread to me ;
The wind's voice where the hill-path went
Was more than tambourine can be.
And more than purr of friendly cat
I love the watch-dog's bark to hear ;
And more than any lubber fat
I love a Bedouin Cavalier !

On page 15 we have an extract from *Labid*—" a true desert dweller ", whose poems have, as Professor Nicholson aptly says, a freshness and delicacy that owe as much to nature as to art :—

What here will a man devise to seek after ? Ask him ye !
A vow that he may fulfil ? on some idle errant thought ?
The snares on his path are spread, encompassing him : if he
Unstricken escape the snares, yet soon shall his strength be naught.
He journeys the whole night long and saith in his heart, 'Tis done,
Albeit a living man is ne'er done with toil and pain.
Say ye, when he portions out what now he shall do or shun,
" Bereaved may thy mother be ! Hath Time preached to thee in vain ? "

Thus sings *Ta'abbata Sharra*, mourning the death of his uncle. Here we have all the qualities gathered together which the Arabs prized and professed to possess: Courage unfaltering; generosity unfailing; self-sacrifice unshrinking; loyalty in friendship; persistence in hatred to foes; and, last but not least, undeviating devotion to the tribe :—

Hard the tidings that befell us, heart-breaking ;
Little seemed thereby the anguish most aching.
Fate hath robbed me—still is fate fierce and froward—
Of a hero whose friend ne'er called him coward.
As the warm sun was he in wintry weather ;
'Neath the Dog-star, shade and coolness together ;
Spare of flank, yet this in him showed not meanness ;
Open-hearted, full of boldness and keenness ;
Firm of purpose, cavalier unaffrighted—
Courage rode with him and with him alighted ;
In his bounty a bursting cloud of rain-water ;
Lion grim when he leaped to the slaughter.
Flowing hair, long robe his folk saw aforetime,
But a lean-haunched wolf was he in war-time.
Savours two he had, untasted by no men :
Honey to his friends, and gall to his foemen.
Fear he rode, nor recked what should betide him ;
Save his deep-notched Yemen blade, none beside him.

In the distinguished roll of Arabian poets women too hold an honoured place. Renowned for poetry in the early times were *Khansa*, who excelled in elegiac verse ; *Maisun*, wife of Muawiyah, a singer of no mean order ; *Safiya* of Bahelá

famous for fine, delicate poetry and *Fari'a*, daughter of *Tarif*, celebrated for a dirge for her brother, Walid, who was slain in battle by Yazid, son of Mazyad, in the reign of Harun.

Universal was the passion for poetry among the Arabs. The Caliph Abdul Malik is reported to have requested the teacher of his sons to instruct them in ancient poetry. And thus runs the story of a full-blooded Arab: When asked what instructions his son was to receive he replied: "Instruction in the Law of Inheritance," whereupon the other rejoined that that was a study fit only for the *Clients*, and was not becoming to the Arabs, who needed no more for culture than a knowledge of their ancient poets.

The passion for poetry continued, and for long, and in this sphere of culture women *even*, in later times, held their own. But as Von Kremer, in his *Culturgeschichte des Orients*, points out: "A perceptible decline in this direction is obvious about the second and third century of the Hegira. True, even in later times, fine cultured women are met with—especially slave girls, studiously trained, who improvised verses—yet it would not be incorrect to say that the poetical and literary output of women is clearly and sensibly on the wane. Only in Spain, where Arab culture attained its highest splendour, did ladies show a special taste and aptitude for poetry and literature."

Vast is the field of poetical literature, but, alas, it is only a partially explored field. For beauty and richness and delicacy of thought; for sweetness and grace and perfection of expression, Oriental poetry will yield to none in the world. But the star of the Orient is no longer in the ascendant, and thus its literature and learning suffer slight and neglect, not only at the hands of outsiders, which we might have endured, but at our own hands which makes the situation humiliating to the last degree.

Occasionally some lover lifts the veil and affords us a glimpse of the hidden treasures, which, like a lightning-flash, only makes the darkness around more painful than ever. But our thanks are due to those disinterested seekers after Light and Truth and Beauty who bring to us the hope of a possible dawn of better days.

I shall conclude with an extract from *Dr. Gustav Weil's* admirable history and criticism of Arab Poetry (*Islamitische Völker*, pp. 144 *et seq.*) :—

" Before the Prophet, in the art of poetry alone could the Arabs boast a high standard of attainment. This was due to the peculiar life of the Beduins, and the great esteem in which poets were held. The poet was at once the judge and the representative of his tribe, when he sang its glories, or poured forth the feelings of his heart. To the portrayal of brilliant feats of arms were added a description of the weapons, of the charger, of the camel, of the scene of action, eulogy on the virtues of the tribe or of the poet himself, which chiefly consisted in bravery, beneficence, hospitality, eloquence, or censure of the vices of the enemy—namely, cowardice, greed, heartlessness. These were the main topics of the pre-Islamite poetry. They were generally introduced by an invocation to the Beloved, and were here and there interwoven with wise maxims and reflections.

" Many felicitous circumstances co-operating together brought poetry, among the Arabs, to a high pitch of excellence: the annual pilgrimage to Mekka made the dialect of the Qur'aish the common language of the people and the poet. Add to this the poetical contest at the Fair of Okaz; the absolute political and religious freedom; and finally, the isolation of the Arabs from the rest of the world, which made their own little affairs all the more important in their eyes. Of all the things of the earth, they only knew the desert, their tent, their camel, their weapons, their loved-one, their guests and their enemies. On these their burning, glowing imagination concentrated, and out of these were drawn true, living, palpitating pictures. The lack of rich description of natural scenery, which is easily explainable, among the inhabitants of the middle and Northern Arabia, the home of Arab poetry, is amply compensated by the picturesque account of the desert-life with its simple joys and sorrows; the long wearisome campaigns in inclement weather or in burning heat; the noise and din of battle; fights against fate, leopard or hyena; these topics alternate with the description of a quiet, comfortable tent, or a joyous feast ending with song, dance and games.

" The influence of Islam on Arab poetry was not very favourable, since with Islam the individual life of the Arab passed away, and the sway of religion over head and heart became so powerful that every other thought and feeling receded into the background. The celebration of one's own heroic deeds, or those of the tribe, henceforward lost all its value and significance, compared with those of the Prophet or his Companions. Even the great war against the Infidels, though conducted with the fire and fervour of religious enthusiasm, could no longer evoke that intense personal feeling to which we owe so many fine pieces of pre-Islamite poetry. No longer now, as before, undauntedness in battle, kindness and

generosity to the poor or the traveller, were purely personal virtues, but a divine command, the fulfilment of which led to Heaven, and its infringement to Hell.

"And yet the desert still sheltered many a poet who, unconcerned about the Qur'an and the Islamic rule, gave free and unfettered utterance to his own thoughts in bold and fearless song. Most of the Omayyad Caliphs not only tolerated profane poets, but even loaded them with presents, with the result that the old form of poetry was steadily supplanted by a new one, which sang the praises of powerful patrons and mighty rulers. Thus the applause of the populace became more and more a matter of indifference to the poets. They expected their reward from the Caliph, whom they feted, flattered and adored, and whose glories they sang. This became their sole endeavour; and thus court-poetry, superseding all other forms of poetry, rose triumphant and supreme.

"Further, the settlement of the rules of prosody, which began under Mansur, also prejudicially affected Arab poetry. True, verses became more refined, more glowing, more correct, but less natural, spontaneous, sprightly, than those of the older poets. In addition to this, the old poems were collected and reduced to writing, and were held up as models; with the result that verses were composed according to the old pattern, but without the old inspiration. They became artificial, and wholly unsuited to the new conditions.

"We admire the poem of a Beduin, in which he describes for us the camel which carries him over mountains and valleys and through dreary deserts, and the still remaining traces of the abode where once his loved-one lived. We weep with him over the desolate hearth, and accompany him to the tribe which has carried her off. We love to hear him when he praises his own courage and perseverance and those of his tribe, and follow him into the thick of the battle where he gathers fresh laurels, to share them with his loved-one, won back once again. In this picture there is the very breath of life; here are genuine outpourings of the heart, which make an unfailing, moving appeal. But when a poet who spends his days and nights in the palace of a Caliph, or that of a Wazir, immersed in wine, music and dance, begins in the old fashion describing the camel which has brought him through perilous paths to his patron, from whom he expects a reward for his Kasidah, it is not the language of the heart but of art and convention that we hear.

"Mansur was of too cold and calculating a nature to have any relish for poetry, and too miserly to allure poets, by presents, to his court. Mahdi, Hadi, Harun and Mamun had a taste for poetry, and were generous to the poets; but by then the poets

had sold their souls in bondage, and had forfeited their ancient freedom. Anything offensive to the ruler, his friends or his religious susceptibilities, was fraught with disastrous consequences: and thus poetry no less than biography became the handmaid of despotism."

Long past was the day when life was gay, and expression of thought immune from the double tyranny of religion and despotism. Political conditions affected life no less than letters. The heavy weight of the tyrant's hand crushed freedom, and with freedom perished light and love. No literary outburst, no efflorescence of genius, no bold, untrammelled speculation, has the Age of Servitude ever seen, or ever shall see. Arabic literature, no less than other world literatures, proclaims this truth. We are thankful to Professor Nicholson for taking us to those times—all the more so because they serve, or at least should serve, as a spur and stimulus to us in a depressing despondent age.

III

THE NEW WORLD OF ISLAM

THE Eastern problem is perhaps the most pressing problem of the day. It certainly is one fraught with far-reaching consequences for East and West alike. It calls for a careful, dispassionate, impartial study: for no true understanding or appreciation of this problem is possible unless it strikes and sustains the note of scrupulous impartiality. The heat of passion and controversy, dogmatic assertiveness, petulance, pride, contempt—all these must, for the moment, be put aside. Truth, and truth only, should be our one guide, our sole aim, our destined goal. In the study of this all-engrossing problem we receive much assistance from Mr. Lothrop Stoddard's *New World of Islam* — recently published in America. It is no political pamphlet. It is a work marked with profound thought, keen insight, sound judgment, patient research, and genuine understanding of the world of Islam, its hopes and aspirations.

That there is deep discontent, disaffection, impatience of the existing régime—that there is all this, and all the world over—no one will, for an instant, deny or dispute. But whatever may be the causes elsewhere, we are at present concerned only with the world of Islam. That here, too, precisely, the same spirit exists, as elsewhere, and is slowly, surely, steadily gaining ground, is beyond cavil or doubt. Mr. Stoddard has studied this question, has examined the reasons from time to time given forth, and has stated his conclusions. Let us consider these. He begins his fascinating book with the study of the rise and progress of Islam. In glowing language he describes the wondrous development and culmination of its dazzling civilization. By magic, as it were, Islam transformed the old decrepit world, and made its headquarters the centre of commerce, the seat of learning, the focus of a world-wide civilization. But while recounting the glory of Islam, Mr. Stoddard has not told us why and how

a civilization so powerful, and an Empire so closely knit by religion and politics, declined after only three centuries of existence. Though not strictly within the scope of his work, to have done so would have thrown a great deal of light both on the past and the present history of Islam and the movements now working within its bosom.

The real causes of the downfall of the Muslim Empire appear to have been to us two-fold—Religious and Political. But in Islam the two are so inextricably intertwined that they must really be dealt with as one—one acting and reacting on the other.

Religion—to which Muslims, at the outset, owed their marvellous, their well-nigh miraculous success—became, in course of time, their supreme stumbling-block. The old austere, stern Islam which disciplined life and regulated the relations of man and man—tossed in the surging waters of Omayyad heathenism and Abbasid irreligion and levity—soon lost its force, its vitality, its refining, purifying, ennobling influence. The moral basis of life gave way. Islam became an Empire outwardly Islamic, but inwardly heathen, sceptical, irreligious to the core. Religion became a mere formal, meaningless observance, and ceased to be an uplifting force. The essence of Islam was lost in a crowd of trivial, insignificant, foolish practices. The essentials were lost sight of—the non-essentials were given the palm and the crown. Hence bigotry, fanaticism, wilful blindness, aversion from progress, intolerance of light and enlightenment. The Reign of Light ended, that of Darkness stepped in. Long, long past was the day when Nazzam, the Muslim Philosopher, could say "*the first condition of knowledge was doubt*"; for to orthodox Islam "doubt" was synonymous with disgrace, torture, and death.

Religion became hide-bound, impervious to light and leading. The *Will of God* was responsible for all that happened, and resistance to that will was impiety, a piece of hopeless, insane folly. Decay set in, and alas continued. The will to resist or assert was non-existent. Listless, apathetic, indifferent to the world around them, the Muslims lived either sunk in immorality or smitten with intellectual paralysis or plunged in wild religious ecstacy. Hushed was the voice of Islam, which like a trumpet-call, summoned the Muslims to the field of death without fear or hesitation! Lost was the martial

valour and vigour which scattered to the winds the Roman legions and effectually shattered the might of the proud Chosroes! All this was a thing of the past. In such a world and amidst such a people progress had no meaning, no significance. Add to this the fact that political troubles, which religion, so long as it was a vital and real force, kept in check, now broke out in all their fierce, unrestrained intensity.

Even the Islamic solidarity on which Mr. Stoddard has so rightly laid emphasis, gradually disintegrated, till it reached vanishing point. The Caliphs forgot their duties —the people their obligations. That bilateral compact between the subject and the sovereign—the essence of Islamic sovereignty; that high ideal which animated and guided the first Caliphs throughout their careers; that intense religious fervour which set the early Muslim aglow with an unrestrained ardour; that sense of unity and brotherhood which welded together the Pre-Islamite Arabs—riven by faction and torn by tribal jealousy—the splendid virtues which account for the phenomenal success of the early Muslims—all these weakened, waned, faded away.

Tribal jealousies set religious unity at naught; political necessities of the hour, snapped, effaced the link of Muslim brotherhood; loyalty, allegiance, honour, trust—all perished in the rising tide of gross personal ambition and unabashed selfishness. Thus religion became a mere pretence; politics, the happy hunting ground of unscrupulous adventurers.

The Abbasids, having erected their power with the help of foreigners, steadily supplanted the Arabs by the Persians, Turks and Mogols. The pure-blooded Arab was thrown into the background, neglected, slighted, shorn of his power and prestige. The central authority, weak and impotent, was unable to exercise any effective control over its governors. New Kingdoms were carved out of the Caliphate, and new rulers ruled independently of the Caliph. The Caliph was reduced to a shadow; a mere phantom exercising no authority, a captive in his own palace, a Cæsar without any legions, a Pope without any power save that of pronouncing a benediction upon the crowned heads near and around him.

The horizon thick with menacing clouds; troubles both at home and abroad; sects warring with sects; factions fighting with factions; new races admitted to the bosom of the

Caliphate, astir with hope and ambition, adventurers snatching at the throne and the sceptre; the spirit of unity dead and buried—what a sad, sombre spectacle the Caliphate offered about the year 1000 A.D.! Henceforward Islam enters on its downward path. Europe advances from victory to victory; but wrapped in a false security, Islam sits, self-complacent, resigned to the will of God, with mediæval fetters and religious blinkers. It scorns Western ideas. It scoffs at Western progress. Was it the sleep of death, or was it a merely temporary moral and intellectual paralysis?

On this point we shall hear the author of the *Herrschenden Ideen des Islams*. In that scholarly work—still unsurpassed—von Kremer[1] observes: "Chengiz Khan, the great Mogal prince, burst from Turkistan into the Muslim countries, destroying and flooding them with a crimson stream (1218). His son Halaku continued the conquests, and, with the capture of Bagdad and the execution of the Caliph, extinguished the Caliphate. Islam seemed lost: pressed on the one hand by the crusaders filled with religious fervour; and on the other by the wild, plundering, ever-advancing cavalry of the Mogals. But Islam did not perish. In Syria it steadily supplanted the Franks: and in Persia, where a powerful Mogal dynasty had established a vast empire under the name of Il-Khan, the religion of the Prophet won a dazzling victory when Ghazan, the seventh ruler, accepted Islam and entered into friendly relations with the rest of the Muslim Princes. *Not by arms but by religious ideas did Islam vanquish the Northern Conquerors.* There must indeed be some tremendous power in these Semitic religions which enables them not only to weather world-shattering storms but to emerge out of them firmer, stronger, more vigorous than ever. In the War with the Franks, extending over more than a century, Islam passed through a tempering process. The rift that had opened closed in fire and blood. Islam shook off its lethargy and gathered fresh strength. The Arab nation, which had long ceased to champion the religious ideas that had arisen and grown into maturity in their midst, now retired into the background, handing over the torch to a nation ruder but more powerful, whose empire soon embraced

[1] It has been translated into English by me and published in the Sir Asutosh Mookerjee Silver Jubilee Volume, under the title of "Politics in Islam", p. 234.

the entire Orient, and whose political power the old Caliphate never attained or equalled." [1]

And Von Kremer is right. Islam has survived many a world-shattering storm, and has come out stronger than ever. History has a hopeful message for Islam—a message to hearten and cheer her on her onward march to freedom. Mr. Stoddard is no alarmist. He has, to our mind, in no way magnified the significance of the present Islamic movement, which has under many colours and many disguises but one supreme end in view—Political Emancipation and Economic independence. Hence the reform of the abuses which have sapped the vitality of Islam: hence the attempt to unite the Muslims under the old Islamic banner of Muslim brotherhood; hence the stir and animation; hence the growing co-operation, the spirit of sacrifice, fearlessness, courage, daring. That priceless gift—the Muslim solidarity—could that gift lapse or pass for ever away from the Muslims? No! Eclipse it may suffer—perish it never will. It is deeply rooted in the Muslim heart, and heart responds to heart. The Muslim brotherhood—it is Islam's strongest stay and support; its crowning glory, its treasured asset; its watchword in the hour of peril; its *Te Deum* in the moment of victory. History has taught its worth, and to it the Muslims appeal with a confidence which will never belie, and a hope which will never desert, them. Upon this Muslim solidarity Mr. Stoddard has laid his finger, and this Muslim solidarity is Islam's brightest hope.

But we are anticipating events. From 1000 A.D., as we have stated, Islam has been on the downward trend. It seemed for a time as if all life was extinct; all activity dead; all hope gone, all efforts and aspirations at an end. While Islam was indifferent to progress, Europe was making wondrous efforts in every direction of human activity. It was enlarging the boundaries of human knowledge; it was improving its material conditions; it was annexing country after country; it was lopping off Islamic territories—one by one; it was over-shadowing the East and establishing its dominion, conquering, crushing, subjugating the Easterns. "One by one," says Mr. Stoddard, "the decrepit Muslim states fell before the Western attack, and the whole Islamic

[1] See Toynbee, Western Question in Turkey and Greece. "Islam is still a greater force in its world than Christianity now is among us," p. 12.

world was partitioned among the Western powers. England took India and Egypt; Russia crossed the Caucasus and mastered central Asia; France conquered North Africa; while other European nations grasped minor portions of the Muslim heritage."

By the nineteenth century, Islam awoke to the menace which threatened its very existence. Europe was bent on wiping it out as a political force. Resist its onward march or perish! The Great War made this position more palpable, more pitiful than ever. "Turkey," says Mr. Stoddard, "was extinguished, and not a single Muslim state retained genuine independence. The subjugation of the Muslim world was complete on paper."

Once awakened to the peril Islam, too, has donned armour and gathered strength. During the last hundred years the "immoveable" East has shaken off its lethargy, and has faced the realities of life. To meet the situation it was imperative to be up and at work; to forge weapons, to avert danger. Arabia took the lead. There on its soil came to life the *Wahabi* movement, which aimed at the reform of Islam. Islam must be purified, reformed, vitalized. Without reform no hope was possible—no successful struggle conceivable. The *Wahabi* movement was wise, well-timed, with the promise of great results. Islam had declined because Islam had fallen from its high ideals. Back to the old ideals. Back to the old traditions. Back to the old stern Islam of the Prophet —free from the accretions of centuries; swept clear of the dust of hateful controversies. The *Wahabi* movement was a step in the right direction; a step preparatory to yet more liberal, wider, more sweeping reforms and large-embracing ambitions.

It was but the prelude to a yet wider Muslim revival—the movement known as Pan-Islamism. Concomitant with those religious reforms which were transforming Islam from within, there came in the swelling flood of European influences affecting social, economic, political conditions in the East. They leavened Eastern thoughts; kindled Eastern imagination; opened up undreamed of vistas of political rights, and excited visions of political freedom. These surging ideas of nationality; of self-government; of higher education; of equality and so forth, stirred the East to its depths. They awoke fascinating dreams of a future, and inspired among the

Easterns the belief that it lay within their power to make, to mould, to shape *that* future. Was there anything to transmute that dream into reality; any solid, substantial basis to clutch at, to work upon? The Muslim mind, with unerring instinct, reverted to the Muslim solidarity—so rich in results in the past; so full of potentialities for the future.

At the root of Pan-Islamism lies this instinctive solidarity of Islam. Hence Pan-Islamism! Hence the new types of religious fraternities—all working for one end; namely, to foster, to strengthen Muslim unity; to check Western pressure; to arrest the advancing tide of Western aggrandizement.

In this connection the Senussiya movement is an instructive study. Senussiya was born about the year 1800. A man of vast and varied experiences; of deep learning; of recognized piety; he travelled a great deal in North Africa, preaching a reform of religious abuses. He felt and rightly felt that religious reform was a necessary preliminary to other reforms, and that only reformed Islam and reformed Muslims could ever hope successfully to stem the tide of European ascendancy. Islamic History had taught that lesson to him, and that lesson he took to heart, preached, emphasized, inculcated, all his life. At Mecca he came under the influence of the Wahabi preachers, and they further quickened his reforming zeal. He established a monastery near Derna in Tripoli, but he soon came into conflict with the Turkish authorities, and moved his headquarters to Jarabub, far to the south in the Libyan desert. In 1859—the date of his death—his organisation had spread over the greater part of North Africa. The work inaugurated by the father was ably carried on by the son. His piety, his devotion, his spotless character, considerably extended and strengthened the power of the fraternity. During the latter part of his reign he removed his headquarters to the Oasis of Jawf, where he died in 1902. He was succeeded by his nephew, Ahmad-ul-Sharif, the present head of the order. To-day the Senussi order is the most powerful order in Islam. Considerable is its influence in Arabia; complete its sway in North Africa. There it has a vast network of organisation, working for beneficent purposes. The colonial authorities—British, French, Italian, as the case may be—are careful in avoiding conflict or collision with the Senussi order. And the Senussi

too shrink from any conflict with the powers that be—Christian or Turkish. The Senussi, though cautious and careful, are neither idle nor unmindful of their mission. Their programme is a sound programme, and a programme that will surely bear fruit. "They believe," as Mr. Stoddard points out, "that the political liberation of Islam from Christian domination must be preceded by their profound spiritual regeneration." This end they are seeking, and for this end they are striving. Hence their untiring efforts to improve the morals and manners and material conditions of those that are under their sway. They believe not in needless, aimless shedding of blood, or fighting for mere fighting's sake. On and on they proceed, covering North Africa with their lodges and schools; spreading light and culture; fostering a spirit of discipline and self-restraint; steadily pursuing the path of slow but sure progress; preparing for the struggle for freedom and independence which they know, and know only too well, would, if ill-timed, be disastrously fatal to themselves. Not only has the North yielded to their influence, but Southward too their successes have been indubitable. They have won over millions of negroes to the faith of Islam.

During the last hundred years the effort to purify has gone hand in hand with the effort to make converts for Islam. Extraordinary has been Islam's triumph in this direction. During the past century, not only has Islam successfully fought Paganism but also African Christianity. Tribes which fifty years ago hardly counted a single Muslim have now wholly become Muslims. Not only in Africa but in Russia, Asia, China, and the Dutch Indies, the Muslim Missionary has had astonishing successes. Islam has felt the struggle for existence. Mr. Stoddard, therefore, is right in referring to the new-type religious fraternity and the missionary activity of Islam, within the last hundred years as infallible signs of the Muslim awakening to the dangers with which Islam stands threatened. Islam needed organisation. Islam needed a growing Muslim population. Islam needed a strong, powerful religious bond. All these needs were felt, and were met with no uncertain, hesitating spirit; but in serious, methodical mood. Live or perish! The answer to this challenge was given by the Wahabi movement; by Pan-Islamism; by the new-type religious fraternity; by the firm and vigorous determination to reclaim the lost heritage

of Islam; by contempt of threat and indifference to suffering and death. From the middle of the nineteenth century the East has come more and more under the influence of European light and lore. European thought has shaped, defined, accelerated the movements manifest throughout the Islamic and the Eastern world—movements making for unity, for progress, for liberty and freedom. Slow would have been the march of events—much slower than it has been—had it not been for the Russo-Japanese War of 1904.

Till then Western supremacy was considered irresistible—a fatal decree of the gods. The Eastern looked up to the Western with an awe and reverence which it is impossible to imagine now. Closer contact has destroyed that spell and the Eastern now looks upon him as a man of like passions with himself. The European's claim to superiority is now a myth, a fiction, a relic of bygone days. His complacent aloofness is now resented, and, to our mind, is not a little responsible for the spirit against him which is gaining, day by day, in volume and intensity throughout the East.

All Asia and Africa were athrill with joy at the defeat of a first-class European power by an Asiatic people. It was glad tidings. But though from 1904 the European spell was broken, the European aggression continued, and the Muslim world answered that aggression by protest and unwonted moral solidarity.

The Muslim world was no longer to be shelved. It was determined to make its power felt; its voice heard. The great war aggravated an already critical situation. Stridently vocal became the Muslim protest. Islam was up in arms, and Muslims banded together unto death for their faith and their right. Islam has entered once again on an upward path. In this fixed is her determination, unequivocal her voice.

Widespread is the spirit of discontent, clear is the voice of revolt against European ascendancy. The most singular feature of the movement is that the stronger the European influence the more intense the spirit of resistance. The weapons used are European weapons. The arguments advanced are European arguments. The methods employed are European methods. The call for self-government; the right to rule; the opposition to Western domination; political agitations; political combination, strikes, non-co-operation. Are they of Eastern origin or of European descent? Europe

has opened the eyes of the Orient. Europe has furnished materials for political warfare. Europe has taught her the ideas of freedom and liberty. Would Europe now stem the tide ; crush the hopes ; stifle the rising spirit of the East ?

Too late is it to try a reactionary policy, to embark upon repressive measures. Men die, but ideas are immortal. No earthly power can kill or destroy them. Was it not Dumas who said : " Men are visible, palpable, moral. You can meet, attack, subdue them ; and when they are subdued, you can subject them to trial and hang them. But ideas you cannot oppose that way. They glide unseen ; they penetrate ; they hide themselves, especially from the sight of those who would destroy them. Hidden in the depths of the soul, they thrive, throw out deep roots. The more you cut off the branches which imprudently appear, the more powerful and inextirpable become the roots below." In Egypt, in India, wherever European influence dominates—there the movement is in full flood. Islam has protested, with one voice, against the European policy. Muslim India has been first and foremost in this protest. From one end of India to the other the Muslim cry has been to call a halt to the European aggression. Splendid the organisation ; untiring the effort ; fierce the zeal ; steadfast the purpose ; undismayed the spirit ; the Khilafat movement—a child of Pan-Islamism, a worthy child too—has proved beyond all doubt or question that the Easterns are capable of the widest and the most effective organisation, and that Muslim solidarity is not a fiction but a fact. If the political programme is the vindication of the honour of Islam and the restoration of her ancient glory—the specific programme of economic Pan-Islamism is : " The wealth of Islam for Muslims. The profits of trade and industries for Muslim instead of Christian hands. The eviction of Western capital by Muslim capital. Above all, the breaking of Europe's grip on Islam's natural resources by the termination of concessions in lands, mines, forests, railways, custom-houses, by which the wealth of Islamic lands is to-day drained to foreign shores."

How then does the matter stand ? Within the last hundred years Islam has risen to the occasion ; has determined to do battle for its existence. She has refrained from rushing headlong into the struggle : for precipitate action would mean the ruin of her cause, the final extinction of her hopes. She

has perceived the necessity of careful preparation, and to this end she has steadily, unwaveringly worked. Two of the most formidable weapons in her armoury she has sought out and used: *Muslim solidarity* and *Muslim Missionary zeal.* One will augment the numerical strength of Islam; the other will unite, strengthen, cement, vitalize it.

The Islamic world to-day—united by its imperishable religious tie—stands firm, resolute, of one heart and mind and voice.

"It is not a mere copying of the West that is to-day going on in the Muslim world, but an attempt at a new synthesis, and assimilation of Western methods to Eastern ends."

No human foresight can peer into the veil of futurity, but amidst circumstances, fair and auspicious, the work has begun; we may reasonably hope that in glory and triumph it will close.

In India, before our very eyes, we have a wonderful phenomenon—undreamed of, unimagined, unhoped by the wildest hope of man. We have, here, Islamic solidarity co-operating, without a jarring, discordant note, with Hindu solidarity. May the Muslim solidarity—for purposes Indian—be merged into the higher, nobler, Indian solidarity—mightily single, splendidly whole, and may the union of the two—true union of head and heart—never waver, relax, end.

Is this an impossible dream, a forlorn hope? No! Recent events bid fair and augur well for the future.

Mr. Stoddard has done a noble service to the East and the West alike. He has revealed the depth, the force, the intensity of the Muslim movements, and he has sounded a timely warning to Western activities. He has pointed out the danger that lies ahead—no fanciful but real danger.[1]

Not to the sword; not to false promises; not to Machiavellian policy will true wisdom and true statesmanship look for the solution of this world-threatening problem—but to love, to honesty, to noble lofty resolve. Truly has the Persian Poet said: The sword perishes, but love endures.

[1] "Whenever one analyses a contemporary movement—political, economic, religious, or intellectual—in these societies (Eastern Societies) it nearly always turns out to be either a response to or a reaction against some western stimulus." Toynbee, Western Question in Turkey and Greece, p. 5.

I shall conclude with the words of Mr. Lothrop Stoddard: "This spirit of rebellion against Western domination has become greatly intensified since the beginning of the present century, and the matter becomes still more portentous when we realize that, by the very nature of things, Western political control in the Orient, however prolonged and however imposing in appearance, must ever rest on essentially fragile foundations. The Western rulers will always remain an alien caste; tolerated, even respected, perhaps, but never loved, or regarded as anything but foreigners. Furthermore, Western rule must necessarily become more precarious with the increasing enlightenment of the subject peoples, so that the acquiescence of one generation may be followed by the hostile protest of the next. It is indeed an unstable equilibrium, hard to maintain and easily upset."

Words of deep insight, unvarnished truth!

IV

ISLAMIC REGENERATION

It must be manifest to the least observant that within recent years a great change, change for the better, has come over us. As a community we are striving strenuously to improve ourselves, and we are beginning to realize that no progress or advancement, in any real sense of the word, is possible without unity and co-operation. In fact recent events have revealed the extent to which the spirit of unity and co-operation has developed. Verily it is encouraging, and augurs well for the future. The first Literary Conference, still fresh in our minds, is one of the unmistakable manifestations of this new and welcome spirit. We shall make no reference to politics, but shall consider here matters purely educational. Education is a subject of absorbing interest and of utmost utility—look at it from whatever point of view we may. We need not go over the ground traversed since the dawn of reasoning; namely, the usefulness of education in the making of a good citizen. It is now as clear as day. Education enlarges the mind and uplifts the soul. It gives a clearer and wider outlook on life; it instils sympathy and it inculcates tolerance; it fashions character and teaches the dignity of man. No one will dispute the benefits that education has conferred upon humanity and will continue to confer to the end of time. It must then be our solemn duty to do all we can towards its advancement. I shall not take up time in discussing university education in India. Whether the universities here have attained the ideal which they aimed at; whether they have succeeded in making their *alumni* what a university, true to its ideal, is supposed to make them; whether any or what reform is needed—these questions are not meant for us, nor need we linger over them. I propose to discuss a question, affecting us nearer home; namely, the question regarding our own Islamic Learning. I propose to discuss what our duties and obligations are to our own learning—

Arabic, Persian and Hindustani; how far we have discharged those obligations; and what must needs be done in future. Great admirer as I am of European culture, I set our own learning first and foremost in the curriculum of our studies. And this for obvious reasons; our own learning is the embodiment of our hopes, traditions, aspirations. It is the reflection of our civilisation, the mirror of our character. It is the monument of our achievements. It is our glory, our very own heritage from the past. I have called it, you will notice, our own learning. Though Arabic and Persian are not our own languages yet they are the two languages in which the highest achievements of Islam lie enshrined. And to us Muslims they have a priceless value; an invaluable interest; an interest which binds us to them for evermore; an interest which transcends the barriers of race and nationality. The tie is religion—the unbreakable tie. Arabic is the language of the Qur'an. Besides, it contains a literature worthy of a great nation. The heralds and pioneers of the Middle Ages, it was left to the Muslims—amid the tumult of fallen and falling things—to carry on the traditions of learning, to uphold the torch of culture. We may find in Von Kremer, Bebel and Dierds (to mention only a few) some acknowledgment of the great debt which Europe owes to Muslim civilisation. And yet to our eternal shame, while France, Germany and England are engaged in the study and exploration of Islamic culture and civilisation, we sit with folded hands, heedless of our obligations and oblivious of our duty.

> Wie von ein bösen Geist im Kreis herumgefuhrt
> Und ringsherum liegt schöne grüne weide.

Thus we are circumstanced, and such apparently is our unhappy situation. Can we not attend to this, our long-neglected duty? Have we not materials available? Have we not sufficient money for enlightened uses? Have we not sufficient men to work with? Surely we have, and to spare, but we have not the will, the inclination for it. We have Libraries—let us mention one—the Khuda Bukhsh Library at Bankipore—where there are unique treasures. We have literary, historical, religious MSS.—extremely rare and some absolutely scarce MSS.—which, were they only edited and published, would enlarge the boundaries

of Islamic Learning, and throw a flood of light on Islamic civilisation. There are other libraries too, public and private Libraries in India, where priceless MSS. lie buried, neglected, forlorn, unread. Surely we should do something for these invaluable landmarks of Muslim Lore? We have suffered Europeans to do what was pre-eminently ours to do. We have let them edit and publish immortal works such as those of Tabari, Ibn Athir, Ibn Sa'ad, Shahrastani, and thousands of others. The Z.D.M.G., a German quarterly publication, publishes the ripest results of European scholarship. The Europeans have annexed to their domain of learning, the learning of the East. We cannot but bow, in silent admiration, to the intelligent industry of a Von Kremer, a Wellhausen, a Goldziher. Does this indifference and neglect reflect credit on us? Is it not time for us to gird up our loins and bestir ourselves? Let us take the words of Lord Morley to heart—words of solemn truth and wisdom. "In our own day communities and men who lead them have still to learn that no waste is so profuse and immeasurable, even from the material point of view, as that of intellectual energy checked, uncultivated, ignored, or left without its opportunity." (*Miscellanies*, Vol. II, p. 46.)

Could not institutes be founded for Islamic Culture and Civilisation as for Sanscrit Learning? If such institutes were to come into existence, at some suitable places, they would, in course of time, develop into centres of Islamic Light and Lore. Islamic Studies would receive support and encouragement; there the texts, sorely in need of publication, would see the light of day; there the struggling scholar, relieved of penury and need, woes and worries, would pursue his studies with an easy mind and cheerful heart. And I am persuaded that all this could be done by our single and unaided effort, were we so inclined. I believe in self-reliance. I believe in working out our own salvation and in looking nowhere else but to our own selves for direction or assistance. Loss of self-reliance means loss of manhood.

I have no faith in turning to other quarters than our own. Let us stand on our own strength, fight our own battle. This should be our guiding principle, and unless we seriously and whole-heartedly adopt it as the guiding, governing,

controlling maxim of our life, our talk will be but idle chatter ; our aspirations an empty dream.

But if Arabic is the language of the Qur'an and of a vast, informing, inspiring literature, no less is the claim of Persian. It is the language of culture and refinement ; and who can be insensible to its ineffable charms ? I have always held that a Mohamedan's education is one-sided and incomplete without it. It has a wealth of thought and ideas, and a literature second to none in the world. To Persian we owe allegiance as much as we do to Arabic. It, too, like Arabic, embodies the culture and civilisation of Islam. Here, also, lies a vast field unexplored ; a great deal of good work unattempted and undone. This, like Arabic, has again been the exclusive sphere of activity on the part of Europeans.

Institutions such as I have sketched, will do for Persian what they will do for Arabic.

We are not in need of examples of benefactions in the history of Islam. Every nobleman, every man of wealth was a patron of Letters. Learning, in the hey-day of Islam, was, so to speak, in the air, and learned men were held in high esteem. We may read in Dr. Wüstenfeld's *Academien der Araber* of the number of universities that sprang up in Islamic countries—universities, largely and lavishly endowed, not by Government, but by private donations. These far-famed seats of learning attracted scholars and students from all parts of the world. Learning was not sold, but given, and learned men lived and studied and wrote, free from the sordid cares of life. The Biographical Dictionary of Ibn Khallikan is instructive reading ; for it is a noble testimony to the Islamic love and devotion to learning. I have no time here to describe the glories of Baghdad, Cairo and Cordova, or to cite instances of literary patronage such as we have in the history of the Court of Hamadan. I must refer my readers to the glowing pages of Sédillot, Viardot, Dozy and Zydan. What I fervently hope and pray is that we, following the example of the great Muslim benefactors of the past, will prove ourselves worthy of the traditions of Islam.

If Arabic and Persian have not had their due—no more has Hindustani had its due. The necessity for English education has completely thrown these languages into the background, and this fact is all the more to be regretted as

the ignorance in this connection has stood in the way of the real and genuine progress of the Mohamedans. No one will deny for one moment the educative value or the expansive force of European culture and civilisation, but is European culture to be acquired only at the expense and sacrifice of Eastern culture? There can be no two opinions on this subject, and yet while the one sphere of activity is coming more and more to the front, the other is steadily on the decline. Orientals we are, and Orientals we must remain, and European culture can never be for the majority of us more than an incidental and subsidiary acquisition. It is therefore to Eastern culture that we must pre-eminently turn. Let us take all we can from the West. Let us study its languages and literatures, its history and civilisation; let us assimilate and absorb all that is worth assimilating and absorbing, but let us not play the sedulous ape to the West, nor lose our distinctive stamp and individuality. Otherwise we shall lose all that is ours without making our own that which really does not and cannot belong to us.

To Hindustani we must turn. It is the *lingua franca* of nearly all India. It has a fine literature, and a bright future lies before it. It needs care, cultivation. Do we bestow upon it the solicitude that it justly deserves? I am afraid the answer must be in the negative. Have we done anything in the way of making this literature accessible in decent editions? Ghalib has been published at Cawnpore, and the edition is certainly a credit to its publishers. But where can we look for and find decent editions of Mir Taqi, Sawda, Zawq, Momin, and others of the immortals? Are they not worthy of remembrance, respect, veneration? Are they not the great intellectual giants of Muslim India? And is this the reward of greatness—neglect, oblivion, ingratitude? Are these illustrious ones unworthy even of a decent edition? And what attempt has been made to write the history of their earthly pilgrimage? Is there any biography of any of these worth the name? England has its "Men of Letters", and so has France; but for these alas! there is the eternal sleep in an eternal night. We have thus the pitiful spectacle of a literature which can show no decent editions of its classics, and of a people who have no biographical dictionary to record and hand down the deeds of their noble dead. Enough! Were we to make a

catalogue of our deficiencies and shortcomings it would make doleful reading. Let us do something useful, something practical, something substantial—and let it be done quickly. Let us have realities as well as dreams. A large field lies before us calling for intelligent and enthusiastic labour. Let us, then, in all seriousness set to work. I have indicated the directions in which we can usefully and profitably devote our energies, and were we to realise but a tithe of what we hope and expect, a great step would have been taken towards the intellectual and moral regeneration for which we all so fervently, so passionately pray. Though the goal be still far off, we need not despond. Only let the foundation be laid; a beginning made. Poets have dreamed of "the Parliament of man and federation of the world". May we not also hope that in some more or less near future this beautiful land of ours will become a land of real learning, a cradle of true heroes, a nursery of genuine patriots; a land where religion will be a uniting and not a disintegrating force; a land where love will hold complete sway, and light will for ever dissipate our darkness? To that end let us all strive. Each generation must contribute its share, and by its quota each generation will be judged. We should therefore make our contribution to the cause of culture and education a solid and not a shadowy contribution. Let us remember for evermore the solemn and soul-stirring words of that finest and saddest of all Russian writers—Dostoievsky—"Humble thyself, thou man of Pride! Set thy hand to labour, thou man of leisure."

V

THE ARAB KINGDOM AND ITS FALL

CALCUTTA University will shortly publish an English translation of Wellhausen's *Arabische Reich und Sein Sturz*, by Mrs. Margaret Graham Weir. Mrs. Weir is to be congratulated on her choice and her excellent rendering of the German text. She could not have selected a more scholarly or a more widely-needed book for her literary efforts; and her translation is undoubtedly a work of high literary order. Wellhausen is a far-famed scholar, and his works on Islam mark an epoch in the history of Oriental Learning in Europe. They are characterised by profound research, rare critical powers, judicial impartiality and keen insight. His book on *Arab Paganism* is a finished piece of historical erudition. It set and accomplished the task of exploring the uncharted sea of Pre-Islamite Arabia. It is a mine of valuable information, and reconstructs for us Arabia before the Prophet, with its quaint fetishism, its strange ways, its strikingly singular customs, its uncanny traditions, its curious social mechanism, and, if we may say so, its extraordinary political constitution. Caussin De Perceval and Wellhausen are the two pioneers in that realm; Caussin, with his easy, graceful, light touch, and Wellhausen with his solid, searching criticism. Next to the *Reste* comes his book *Der Islam*—a model of patient enquiry. There, in those pages, unrolls before the reader the entire panorama of the rise, development, and extension of Islam and the Islamic Empire. He has delved deep into original authorities, and has brought western methods to bear upon rich oriental materials that lay to his hand. Not a single text—printed or in manuscript—has escaped his unwearied diligence and not a single modern writer his all-embracing study. We trust, in not too remote a future, we shall have an English translation of this book too; for I consider that simply essential to the study and the understanding of early Islam.

The book lying before us is, indeed, a monument of learning.

I confess to a strange predilection for the Omayyads.

True—tinged with paganism, unorthodox, fond of pleasure, lovers of wine, women and sports, full of life and fun—they sought to live up to the gay old traditions of Arab Heathenism, untrammelled by religion, undeterred by threats of hell. All this and more, if you please. And yet—was not their Empire the pure, unalloyed Arab Empire, strong with the strength of Arab nationalism, and animated with the dignity of Arab pride—uplifting, inflexible, preferring death to dishonour, ready to face and conquer the world? Was it not under them that Muslim rule extended to the farthest regions of the Earth, and Muslim power stood four square to all the winds that blew? Was it not under them that the finest collection of Arab poetry was made, and put in an enduring shape? Was it not their Government which held out to the world the noblest example of toleration, fair play, justice to those of other religions than Islam? Was it not they who laid the foundation of a world-embracing Muslim Polity? What ruler of the Middle Ages—Muslim or non-Muslim—can be compared to the stern Abdul Malik, or the God-fearing Omar Ibn Abdul Aziz? What statesman can be placed by the side of Ziyad or Hajjaj? The Omayyads stood for purity of race and nobility of descent. They resisted foreign influence with its debasing tendencies. They were the upholders of Arab Tradition, and theirs, in the true sense of the expression, was Arab Rule. The fleeting splendour of the Abbasids merely veiled for a time the seeds of incurable decline and decay. It is the history of this dynasty that we read in this learned book. Immense has been the service done by Wellhausen to the Omayyads; for they have never had their just due from the historians who flourished under the Abbasids. Political partisanship; fear of offending the ruling dynasty; prospect of gain; deliberate perversion and distortion of facts—all these have stood in the way of the luckless House of Omayya.

Wellhausen holds the scales even. He seeks and finds the truth. He avails himself of two schools; the school of Kufa and that of Medina. Nor does he lose sight of a third one which stands midway between the two—the school represented by Madaini. This school takes up altogether the Abbasid standpoint, and from it describes the fall of the Omayyads and the rise of the Abbasids.

Abu Mikhnaf, the oldest Arab prose writer, is the main source of Tabari for the old traditions of the times of the Omayyads. He belonged to the Azd of Kufa, and was of a distinguished lineage. We do not know the date of his birth, but at the time of the rising of Ibn Ashath (A.H. 82) he had apparently attained manhood. A friend of Mohamed b. Said Al-Kalbi—Abu Mikhnaf's writings and traditions have been handed down to us by his friend's famous son, Al-Kalbi. Abu Mikhnaf lived to see the fall of the Caliphate of Damascus. His last statements in Tabari refer to the year 132 A.H.

Abu Mikhnaf has not ignored other traditionists, older than or contemporary with himself. We find him, for instance, making use of such authorities as Amir-al-Shahi; Rasibi; Mugalid b. Said; Mohamed b. Said Al-Kalbi. But these do not exhaust his sources. He makes independent enquiries; collects his facts; seeks first-hand information; and presents all with an abundance of detail and fulness of narrative. He is strikingly frank and arresting. The charm of his narrative is considerably heightened by the form which he adopts for it. It is all dialogue and staging. Deep is the debt which the student of Islamic history owes to him. His narrative—and this is another special feature of Abu Mikhnaf—teems with songs and verses in illustration of his point. His greatest service lies in collecting a host of variants of the same thing from reports of different origin, so that we can compare them, and judge what is sure or uncertain in them. The side-issues are kept in their proper places; while the main question is never lost sight of. In important points there are no serious contradictions. The work suggests choice and selection. Throughout, we observe a scheme. Notwithstanding all this—he is deficient in sustained chronology. He mentions few dates, and frequently nothing but the day of the week, without month or year. His events are not harmoniously woven together, but are stated without connection or coherence. There are some characteristics of Abu Mikhnaf, however, which we must not fail to mention. Unlike Arab historians of later times, Abu Mikhnaf does not begin from the beginning of Islam, or from the creation of the world. He starts with the conquests, and deals with the period which he knows best—from the Battle of Siffin

onwards. Moreover, he confines himself to the place where he himself lived—Iraq, and its capital Kufa. Beyond these limits of time and place he is neither altogether safe nor particularly good. Iraq was the centre of opposition to the Imperial Government; and the themes, therefore, which he pursues with greatest relish and eagerness are the risings of the Kharijites and Shiites, and the rising of the Iraqis under Ibn Ashath. He is the custodian of the tradition of Kufa, and his sympathies are on the side of Iraq against Syria, for Ali against the Omayyads.

And yet, to Abu Mikhnaf's credit, we must add that we find, in his recitals, no trace of falsification of facts nor any indication of blind or unreasonable partiality. On one and one occasion only he lapses from his high ideal, and suppresses what does not suit his purpose; namely, that Aqil at Siffin fought against his brother Ali. Thus Abu Mikhnaf is a useful, nay, an invaluable, guide for the history of the opposition parties of ancient Islam, and Wellhausen has made full and free use of him. Important as Abu Mikhnaf is, his light is but feeble and fitful for the period under consideration compared with that thrown on it by the school of Medina. It is not, therefore, upon the school of Kufa, but upon that of Medina, that Wellhausen places his main reliance. Of older date than the school of Kufa the authorities of that school nevertheless come in point of time much later than Abu Mikhnaf. They date from the days when literary scholarship began to migrate from Medina to Baghdad. Foremost in the rank of this band of historians, stand Ibn Ishaq, a freedman; Abu Ma'ashar, likewise a freedman; and Waqidi. They are not seekers of untrodden paths. It is not the first-hand information that they strive for or secure. They have their materials by them. They sift, edit, blend them together. They weave a continuous story out of disconnected, disjointed narratives. Ibn Ishaq must be set down as its founder. In him and his successors we have the *Annals*—then in fashion.

"Chronology," says Wellhausen, "presupposes scientific research and comparison. In these the Medina scholars were not found wanting, and produced results which stand examination remarkably well." "* * * we can trace the progress of the attempt to capture events in the net of time. In completeness of chronology Ibn Ishaq is surpassed by

his successors. Abu Ma'ashar seems to have had a mind for nothing but dates, and even with Waqidi this interest obtrudes itself."

The importance of Medina can scarcely be exaggerated. It is inextricably interwoven with the life of the Prophet and the rise of Islam. It was the seat and centre of Islamic fervour and faith—the home and hearth of its imperishable memories. Among the cities of Islam it held an incomparable position—the refuge of the fugitive Prophet; the theatre of his religious and political activities; the dearly-beloved scene of his growing, ripening, fulfilling hopes; his last and eternal resting-place. Could any other city emulate, or outshine its splendour or its renown? The chief theme of this school was the *sira*, with the *maghazi*, *i.e.*, the life of Mohamed and the foundation of his community through him, and the foundation of the kingdom through him and his Caliphs in the period of the conquest. And to these Ibn Ishaq seems to have mainly confined himself. So impregnable was the position of Medina, so potent its sway, that even during the Omayyad rule, with Damascus as the capital, Medina retained its importance, not only as the seat of the most important Arabian society, but also as the spiritual centre of Islam. Not until the rise of Baghdad and the fall of the Arab Empire did the Sun of Medina set.

The school of Medina—though neither in sympathy nor in co-operation with the secular rule of the Caliphs—did not ignore its existence. It was, however, far more concerned about Syria than about Iraq, or even Khorasan. Certain official statements are regularly repeated in Abu Ma'ashar and Waqidi. These are the accession and death of the rulers; the appointment and deposition of governors in the most important Provinces; the names of the leaders of the annual pilgrimage, and the summer campaigns against the Romans. These statements form the framework of the Medina Annals. Details are rare, except in connection with important crises or important turning-points. Social, political, and economic conditions are excluded from consideration, and are never so much as even hinted at. We are left entirely in the dark as to the relations subsisting between the rulers and the subject races. Nor is any light thrown on those questions which would reveal the inner life and conditions of the times.

Among the Syrian Arabs, a tradition there undoubtedly was. We get glimpses of it in Beladhuri, and also in the Kalbite Awana, who lived in Kufa but through his tribe was connected with Syria. He is often quoted in Tabari as the reporter of Syrian matters, generally according to Ibn Kalbi. For the Syrian tradition, however, we must go to Christian sources—particularly to the *Continuatio* of *Isidore of Seville.* There, the Omayyads appear in a far more favourable light than they do in the purely Arab authorities.

Varied are the sources from which Wellhausen has drawn his facts. But the historian of the Omayyad period suffers from a two-fold difficulty; paucity of materials and hostile bias of the historians. Weil, in his *Islamitische Völker,* has pointed out that, under the Abbasids, history did not attempt to speak the truth, but sought only to support the ruling dynasty at the expense of the fallen Omayyads. History, like Law, was then the thrall and page of despotism.

But neither suppression nor perversion of facts has altogether succeeded. Truth has fought its way, and now reigns triumphant. Justice, long deferred and denied, has at last been meted out to the Omayyads. And we see them, no longer through the eyes of biassed partisans, but through those of History, which inculcates, upholds, proclaims truth and justice. Literature supplements History, and in the prose and poetry of the times we have materials, ample and abundant, for many generations of historians to explore and exploit. Von Kremer and Wellhausen have laid literature under contribution and have shown excellent results. The field is still virgin, and calls for the patient student's unwearied care and diligence.

Will the East surrender its inheritance to the West? Will it not respond to the call of honour and the voice of duty?

VI

THE BOOK-TRADE UNDER THE CALIPHATE

WHEN the Arabs made their conquests and established their Empire they were far too much occupied with military affairs and administrative measures to have either the time or the inclination for the peaceful pursuit of letters. Nor had they, as a nation, shown, in the past, any serious literary or studious tastes. True, they achieved considerable distinction in poetry; but there, in that sphere alone, their literary glory began and ended. With Islam religion became, for the time being, their exclusive passion. It overshadowed every other interest—local, tribal, individual. Allah and his Prophet divided their love and homage. For them, then, the Qur'an—the Book of God—was the only book needed. It was the revelation of God, the quintessence of all wisdom. They loved, revered, treasured, studied, copied this book. It was transcribed on well-prepared animal skins, parchment, and leather which came from the factories of South Arabia and was distinguished by smoothness and excellence of quality.[1] This satisfied all their literary yearnings. There was no need for paper then; for they had neither a literature to set down in writing, nor an elaborate system of government calling for ample stationery to meet its requirements. But though the Arabs themselves were little advanced in civilization, the countries they conquered were countries with a past, a tradition, a rich civilization. Thus, on the conquest of Egypt, the Arabs found a highly-developed industry there, in the preparation of papyrus-plant for writing purposes. This industry was of a very remote antiquity, and, under Arab rule, received a great impetus; for the Muslim Government imposed no taxes on native crafts and manufactures. Its chief seat was at Bura—a small sea-coast town in the Deltaic district of Damietta.[2] The Arabs encouraged this industry. They

[1] Von Kremer, *Cullurgeschichte*, Vol. II, pp. 304 et sqq. Fihrist, 40.
[2] Yaqubi, 125, 127.

even retained the old name of the plant, and called it " Fafir " —while they called the stuff prepared from it " Kirtas ".[1] From here mainly did the Bzyantine Government receive its supply of writing-material, with the result that immense became the export of papyrus from Egypt to Byzantine. The price was paid in ready money.[2] Apart from the papyrus it seems that in Egypt a new method of manufacturing paper was early discovered. An old Arab writer tells us that the Caliph Mutasim, who collected, in his newly-built residence, Samarra, artisans from all parts of the Empire, summoned also paper-manufacturers from Egypt. As papyrus did not grow at Samarra, paper could only be manufactured there from other materials, and these were cotton or linen. How did this new method originate? Accurate information fails us, but one explanation suggests itself to us. When the stock of papyrus became insufficient they resorted to the practice of blending genuine papyrus with cotton. This probably led, in course of time, to the discovery of the manufacture of paper from cotton pure and simple. Up to the third century of the A.H. parchment, or Egyptian papyrus, was used in all government offices. At the time of Amin and Mamun parchment was in general use. In the war between the two brothers the official documents, written on parchment, were *looted* and carried away. They were subsequently washed clean and were sold as writing materials. It is stated that this supply of parchment for long satisfied the popular demand for writing materials.[3] During the period from the beginning of the third to the middle of the fourth century a great change took place. They not only began to import Chinese paper, which always remained very expensive, but there arose an indigenous paper factory in North Arabia, Tehama. Here paper was manufactured from cotton.[4] Ibn Khaldun tells us that in Baghdad itself a paper factory was established at the instance of the Wazir Fadhl Ibn Yahya.[5] In the extreme north-eastern province of the Caliphate an enterprising Chinaman first introduced the art of manufacturing paper from flax. In the *Kitabul Fihrist*—which comes to us from the second half of the fourth century of the A.H.

[1] Ibn Baitar, I, 127.
[2] Beladhuri, 240.
[3] Fihrist, p. 21.
[4] Fihrist, p. 40.
[5] Ibn Khaldun, Prolég., II, 407.

—we find a detailed account of the different kinds of paper prepared from flax. This industry attained its zenith in Samarqand. In its trade the export of paper filled the first place. With the rise of national literature, and with advancing civilization, the need for paper grew more and more. Paper factories arose all over the Muslim Empire. From Egypt the Muslims conquered the whole of the North African coast. Nor even there did their victorious march stop. Forward and forward they went. They conquered Spain. They subjugated Sicily. Both in Spain and in Sicily they introduced the art of manufacturing paper, and in both these countries this industry attained a signal success.[1] Far-famed in the 12th century were the different kinds of paper manufactured at Xativa. While the western countries of Europe had their supply of paper from Xativa, the eastern had theirs from the Levant. In the 11th and 12th centuries paper of Saracenic manufacture displaced the old parchment in Europe. In A.D. 1224 Emperor Fredrick II forbade the use of cotton-wool paper in certain official documents because of its wretched quality. But the question of price made this prohibition ineffective. In the second half of the 13th century paper made of linen makes its first appearance in Europe. To produce paper of cheap quality they mixed up cotton-wool paper with linen ingredients. Possibly this was an invention of the Moors, but nothing can be stated with certainty. From the point of view of civilization, the manufacture of paper, in increasing abundance, and the gradual cheapening of its price, are matters of momentous importance. Books written on parchment or papyrus were so expensive that they were beyond the reach of the average man. The Arabs produced cheaper paper, and with it supplied not only the Eastern but also the Western markets. Thus, learning ceased to be the monopoly of a caste, the privilege of the rich. It became accessible to all. It opened up fresh vistas, struck new veins of thought, broke off the fetters forged by ignorance and fanaticism; it widened the horizon of man. It inaugurated a new age of unwearying activity, of boundless hope.

[1] Idrisi, Geography, Jaubert's Trans., p. 37. Makkari, vol. I, 95 (Eng. tr.). *Cf.* Amari, Storia dei musulmani, III, 805.

In intimate connection with the paper-industry stand some other subordinate industries ; namely, the preparation of ink in various colours, and the art of book-binding. Originally the bindings were very crude. Books were bound in leather, dressed in lime, which, by reason of defective process, remained much too stiff and hard. At a later date, in Kufa, a more effective way of dressing leather was invented. This was done by means of dates, with the result that the leather became softer and limper. In the ornamentation of bindings and the illumination of books much progress was made. The oldest Arab bindings that have come down to us have tasteful designs pressed into the rim, and central shields, but otherwise they are very simple. Only later did the art of splendid decorations on bindings come into vogue. And this came from Persia. In the earliest times Taif acquired great fame for its book-binding.

The public cultivated and the Court encouraged literary tastes. Learning became a sure passport to popular favour and royal patronage. Scholars gave themselves up to learning with absorbing passion, and the rich and prosperous vied with each other in helping forward the cause of scholarship. It became the fashion to establish *madrassahs* and to found libraries. Under conditions so fair and propitious, the book-trade rapidly attained prominence. It drew people to it from the points of view both of self-culture and sure profit.

An old writer, Yaqubi, tells us that in his time, at Baghdad, there were over a hundred book dealers.[1] But this statement should not deceive us. In the East the book-trade is no different now from what it has always been. The dealer generally had a small booth in the vicinity of a mosque, where he kept his books exposed for sale. Such is the case even now, in Cairo, Damascus and other Oriental towns. These, naturally, were manuscripts. He replenished his stock either by purchase or by having MSS. copied on his own account. Generally the dealer himself copied

[1] Bossier (Cicero and his friends, p. 81) tells us that the book-trade scarcely existed in the time of Cicero. Usually those who wished to read or possess a book borrowed it from the author or from his friends and had it copied by the slaves. When they had more copyists than they needed, they made them work for the public, and sold the copies they did not want.

rare MSS. The famous Yaqut, whose geographical work has been edited by Wüstenfeld, was an employee of a book-dealer. As such he copied MSS. and acquired much knowledge. Often the booksellers themselves were industrious men of letters. They collected a great deal of information, and put it together in the form of encyclopaedias and compendiums. These were marked by sound literary judgment and insight. One such literary repertory we possess. It was prepared by a book-dealer of Baghdad about the tenth century A.D. In it he has mentioned all the books with which he became acquainted in the course of a long business career. He did more: he added valuable biographical notices of the authors. This work reveals the astonishing range of the Arabic literature of the time. It also reveals the growing popular passion for collecting books, autographs, rare texts. The compiler tells us that he met in Hadyta, a small town in Iraq, a bibliophile who possessed veritable treasures in old MSS. dealing with the most diverse branches of literature. We are informed that in a large trunk he kept old writings, parchments, documents, texts on Egyptian papyrus, on Chinese paper, on paper from Tehama, Khorasan and even writings on leather rolls. Every piece of writing bore the name of the scribe. All, moreover, was attested by the notes and observations of successive generations of learned men. In his collection were also many autographs of renowned historical personages of the early days of Islam.[1]

Such collectors were numerous. Some collected for study; some, simply because it was the fashion; some again to establish libraries and colleges. But, whatever the motive, universal in the Islamic Empire was the passion for collecting books. A scholar relates to us that he happened to see at a sale a copy of the Commentary of Alexander of Aphrodisias on Aristotle's *Akroasis* (in Arabic called Simā'). He offered 120 dinars (1,200 francs) for the MS. Not having the money with him, he took immediate steps to procure it; but on his return he found that the book in question, along with other books, had already been sold to a Persian (Khorasani) for 300 dinars.[2] A copy of *Kitab-ul-Ain* of *Farahidhi* was sold in A.H. 248 (864 A.D.) for 50 dinars.

[1] Fihrist, p. 40. [2] Ibn Usaiba, fol. 46.

It was brought by a book-dealer of Khorasan to the book-market of Basra.[1]

But it was not long before fraud and imposture found their way into this trade. Shrewd and unscrupulous book-dealers made interpolations in the works of old renowned masters and obtained large prices. Thus, after the death of the famous musician *Ishaq-ul-Mausili*, a bookseller put together a book of songs and passed it off as his.[2] Similar tricks became only too frequent in the book-markets of the East. Forged seals, false dates, forgeries, sometimes too clumsy to deceive, and many other frauds, are only too well-known to those who have dealt in MSS.[3] As mentioned above, the book-collecting passion became almost universal. Mamun founded a splendid library at Baghdad, and the renowned statesman *Saheb Ibn Abad* needed some 400 camels to carry his books—probably a very exaggerated statement. This passion was no less intense in Spain than in Iraq. Cordova held the position of the first book-market in Spain. When a learned provincial died, his books were sent to Cordova for sale. Here is a story, too characteristic of the spirit of the time to be omitted. "I halted," says a scholar, "at Cordova, and continued to visit for sometime the book-market there, for I was in search of a book which I could not find. At last I discovered a splendidly written copy for sale. Full of joy, I began to bid for it, but I was ever and anon outbidden by another, until the price offered far exceeded the worth of the book. I asked the auctioneer who the rival bidder was? He took me to a nicely-dressed gentleman. I addressed him as 'Doctor', and told him that I was ready to let the book go if he really required it for there was no sense or reason in foolishly enhancing the price. He rejoined: 'I am neither learned nor am I aware of the contents of the book, but I have just established a library, and, cost what it will, I shall make it one of the notable things of my town. There is just an empty space there which this book will fill up. As it is beautifully written and tastefully bound I am pleased with it, and I don't care what it costs, for God has given me an immense income.'"[4]

[1] Fihrist, p. 42. [2] Fihrist, p. 141.

[3] I have in my possession a beautiful copy of *Talib-i-Kalim* bearing false seals and false dates. But it is none the less a fine specimen of Oriental penmanship. [4] Makkari, I, 218.

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We can easily conjecture from these facts the popularity and the profit of the book-trade. Every great Arab town, indeed, had its own book-market. With the rapid growth of the book-trade Arab penmanship, at first awkward and clumsy, developed into artistic beauty and form. The books sought after, in the beginning, were books transcribed by discerning, scholarly scribes, who aimed at the correctness of the copy, but such scribes were not, by any means, fine calligraphers. With the growth of the book-trade and the increasing demand for books—larger and larger became the circle of scribes who earned their living by copying MSS. They aimed more at excellent penmanship than accuracy of the text. Thus, a high value was early set on calligraphy. And this stands to reason. To those that were not veritable scholars, fine penmanship made an immediate, irresistible appeal. And the majority of book-collectors were by no means scholars. Hence the importance and increasing importance of calligraphy. The oldest calligrapher, called *Khalid Ibn Abi Hajjaj*, lived under the Omayyad Caliph Walid I, and was appointed copyist of the Qur'an and historical works. To him we owe the golden inscription on the Prophet's mosque at Medina. Even a client *Malik Ibn Dinar* (d. 130 A.H.= 747-48 A.D.) distinguished himself in this art, and worked for money. With the accession of Mamun, learning and the book-trade received an impetus such as they had never enjoyed before.

Henceforward calligraphy steadily pursues the path of progress. The Wazir Ibn Makla (d. 328 A.H., 940 A.D.) was the first to effect great changes in the clumsy, awkward Arabic script. The improvements effected by him were continued by the calligrapher Ibn Bawwab (d. 443 A.H., 1032 A.D.), who attained great distinction and achieved great success in this art. Like Ibn Bawwab, the celebrated Yaqut later acquired fame as a scribe (d. 618 A.H. = 1221 A.D.). The Arabs, since their fall, have lost ground in every sphere of literary and artistic activities, save calligraphy. Here they show a distinct advance. "I have seen," says Von Kremer, in M. Ayrton's collection (which is, now, in the British Museum), "autographs of Ibn Bawwab and Yaqut, but I can assert, with certainty, that the modern calligraphers of Cairo are superior to the former and, indeed, equals of the latter. But it must be added that the more

beautiful the MS. the more untrustworthy the text. Free of faults are the old, inartistic MSS. But this fact did not, in the least, affect the sale of finely-written MSS. to royal libraries, or to the private collections of rich bibliophiles."

Scholars and students alike obtained their living by copying MSS. and selling them to book-dealers. Like every other profession calligraphy, too, became recognized as such —at once honourable and paying.

But, whatever may be the case in Cairo—in India, calligraphy, as an art, is all but extinct. And the book trade in MSS.—Persian and Arabic—is, likewise, now a trade confined to a small circle, who find a market not among their countrymen but among American cold-weather visitors and stray curio-seeking connoisseurs. During the last twelve months I have had extraordinary good luck in MSS. Among others I have purchased two—the Diwans of Muhtashim and Musannif—exquisite specimens of calligraphy and models of accurate transcription. Some day I shall write a paper on the romance of book-collecting; for a veritable romance it is. No longer now does the book-dealer sit by the Mosque with his learned wares. You have now to seek him; and, indeed, full of delight is always the search, and occasionally, wondrous surprises are the finds.

VII

ISLAMICA

WE are struck dumb when we consider the activity of the West and the apathy of the East in matters purely Eastern. While we comfortably sit under the aegis of our great leaders—so futilely eloquent in their protestations of unspotted faith, so zealous in their efforts for the maintenance and advancement of Muslim temporal interests—not infrequently weaving plans for starting newspapers and encouraging Muslim learning—schemes which alas! never mature—Germany is putting us to shame by her splendid ventures and actual achievements. To such German Journals as "*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft*": "*Zeitschrift fur Semitisch und Verwandte Gebiete*": "*Die Welt des Islams*": "*Der Neue Orient,*" etc., Professor Fischer of Leipzig now adds the "*Islamica*". This new Journal is issued from Leipzig, and its first number is an earnest of what is to come. Its scope is wider and more liberal than that of its predecessors, for it will deal both with the language and the culture of the East. Perhaps I should say it will deal chiefly with the languages and the civilizations of the Arabs, Persians and Turks, laying special stress on Persian literature and culture, which have hitherto been much neglected in other journals of its kind. Nor will the phases of Islam, as they exist, in India, in Russia, in China, among the Berbers in Central Africa, be outside its ken. Vast then is the field which it seeks to appropriate and cultivate, and competent the men who have assumed the task. Professor Fischer's name is a guarantee of its worth, and his reputation it must maintain and enhance. To make the interest general, I should say widespread, the Editor has decided to divide the articles between the German and the English languages. This is a wise decision, for the other learned journals, referred to, are practically sealed books to those who know no German. And nothing is more desirable, nay, imperatively necessary, at this juncture,

than to bring home to English-knowing people the rich fruits of recent researches in the domain of Islamic culture. It will draw closer the bond between Islam and true Christianity, for will it not emphasize and strengthen the intellectual and spiritual kinship of the two great religions of the world?

Now let us look at the contents of this new venture. Of the three articles in German: two are by Professor Fischer, and one by Professor Bergsträsser of Heidelberg. Professor Fischer writes a learned paper on Imra-Al-Qais—steeped in light and learning—a paper which will be hailed by the expert with delight; and Professor Bergsträsser gives an account of the *Kitab-Al-Lamat* of Ahmed Ibn Faris—a unique MS.—which he found in the library of Al-Malik-az-Zahir, at Damascus.

No less conspicuous than his paper on Imra-Al-Qais is Professor Fischer's paper on the *Naqaid* of Jarir and Farazdaq. We now turn to the articles in English. In his article on "*The Well in Ancient Arabia*" Professor Braünlich has lighted on a virgin field. The paper is a model of patient ant-like research and industrious scholarship. He has been at pains to collect all the references to "well" in ancient Arabian literature. Nor has he ignored the results of the labours of modern scholars, who have first-hand knowledge of the country. And we can hardly overrate the importance of this subject, for the method of obtaining water was and remains one of the most important problems of the Arabic household. The article in question proposes to deal with the material side of the "well" as it is in use among the Arabs, as also with the place which the well has won for itself in the life of the Arab people. The first instalment is arresting.

When we think of Arabia we generally think of an arid, rocky, sun-scorched country—lacking in water, interpersed with deserts, inclement, forbidding, inhospitable—with only here and there an oasis or a smiling valley. The article "Arabia before Islam" (*Calcutta Review*, Dec., 1924) shows how far from the truth is this prevalent view, and Dr. Braünlich confirms it. We are informed that subterranean water is often to be found at very shallow depths; correspondingly the overwhelming majority of the wells are not dug very deep. The depth of the wells throughout

Najd seldom exceeds 12 or 15 feet. Burton writes of Al-Hamra, which is on the way from Medina to the Red Sea, "water of good quality is readily found in it by digging a few feet below the surface." True, all parts of the country are not so favourably situated, but recent investigations indubitably establish the fact that wells did and do adequately supply the need of Arabia. Dr. Braünlich tells us (pp. 57–58)—"The neighbourhood of Mekka is blessed with wells above every other part. Fasi counts 58 within the city gates, 17 between gate Al-milat and Mina; 15 in the last-named place, etc. Besides Mekka, however, there are other territories which are rich in springs. Musil says that the Biyar Aslug can supply water for 3,000 cattle. Even beyond the main traffic areas water is seldom lacking."

After dealing with the hydrographic aspects of Arabia, Dr. Braünlich passes on to the construction of the simplest kind of well, and then to the enlarged well in a permanent settlement. This is a revealing article. It will help, perhaps, to solve some questions—still obscure—in the domestic and economic life of the Arabs.

Professor Margoliouth describes a hitherto undiscovered MS. of Yaqut, which he hopes soon to edit. This is a rare find, for all hopes of discovering the lost works of Yaqut had long been given up. Fragmentary though the biographies are—they are yet of great importance and value to the students of Islamic history. By the publication of this MS. Professor Margoliouth will add one to the many obligations under which he has laid students of Islamic language and literature. It would be impossible to pass over in silence Professor Nicholson's charming paper on "Iqbal". He tells us that in "Iqbal" there are two voices of power. One speaks in Urdu, and appeals to Indian patriotism —the other uses the beautiful and melodious language of Persia, and sings to a Muslim audience.

By unanimous consent Iqbal is the greatest Muslim poet and thinker of India. He has imaginative glow, fineness of perception, a language bedecked and bejewelled, a sense of catholicity. True, in his poetry we encounter depressions, despairs, self-questionings, at times a note of diffidence; but, despite all these, hope struggles and triumphs. It is not the poetry of pessimism, but of optimism out and out. The deep gloom of his country's present position only

intensifies his confidence in the sureness and brightness of its future. In him the dim shadows of mysticism ; the charms of the ideal ; the frenzied worship of the beautiful ; the love of his country ; the dazzling vision of its future—all have found utterance in language of passionate, superb, incomparable excellence.

Iqbal is the product of the East and West alike. Where else in Eastern poetry do we find that burning love for one's country ; that high-souled patriotism ; that hatred of despotism ; that love of freedom, which shine forth from his verse, and which enchant and captivate the reader ? From lip to lip—wherever the Urdu language is spoken—his poems have flown, nerving, bracing, uplifting the worn and the weary. In him we have the mocking voice of Heine, and yet again the thunderous reverberations of Milton.

Listen :—

" Clad in cotton rags I toil as a slave for hire,
To earn for an idle master his silk attire,
The governor's ruby seal 'tis my sweat that buys,
His horse is gemmed with tears from my children's eyes."

And again : " How long must we lead this moth's life, fluttering round the candle ? Pass how many days in exile, strangers to ourselves ? "

Read and reflect !

Whether he will rank with the giants of Persian mysticism as their peer, we know not—but this we know, and of this we are sure beyond a shadow of doubt—that his will be one of the few honoured names inscribed in letters of gold on the roll of India's greatest sons. Iqbal has planted his foot beyond the waves of time, and political India will always look to him as her most honoured bard.

Curious irony of fate that the descendants or *supposed* descendants of the old Arabs, Persians, Tartars, have suffered their intellectual legacy to pass into the hands of the non-Muslim Europeans ! How the shades of the immortals would weep and wail over their degenerate " representatives " of to-day !

VIII

A DEFENCE OF ISLAM

UNDER the Omayyads a lively intellectual life was developed, and manifold must have been the relations between Muslim and Christian theologians. That religious discussions between them were very frequent we may be certain even though dialogues between Muslims and Christians have not been preserved in the writings of John of Damascus and Theodore Abucara. It was out of these theological discussions, in all probability, that sprang up the first religious sects of Islam, viz., those of the Murjiah and the Qadriyyah (Khuda Bukhsh, *Islamic Civilization*, p. 58). So favourable then was the position of the Christians that they were even suffered to enter the Mosques unmolested, and go about in public adorned with the golden cross. The toleration accorded by the Caliphs must, of necessity, have encouraged frequent intercourse with Muslims. By associating with Greek theologians, finely disciplined in the art of dialectic, the Arabs first learnt philosophical reasoning, which later on they prized so highly. It was from these Greek theologians again that they received their first lesson in dogmatic subtleties—an art in which Byzantine scholarship revelled. In this way alone is to be explained the remarkable similarity which we notice in the main features of Byzantine Christianity and Islamic dogmatics.

A religious discussion is reported to have taken place between Abdul Malik b. Merwan (A.D. 685–705) and Ibrahim, son of Rahib (Monk) Tabarrani,[1] but of this discussion no record or particulars are forthcoming. Despite the lack of historical information, however, we will not be far wrong in assuming that religious discussions continued uninterruptedly until the second half of the eighth and the first half of the ninth centuries, when they became more and more

[1] *The Book of Religion and Empire.* By Ali Tabari, translated into English by Dr. Mingana (Longmans, Green and Co.).

general and wide-spread. No longer merely fleeting discussions, they then assume a more enduring form. Timothy, patriarch of the East Syrian Church (A.D. 780–822), has handed down to us the gist of the public discussion that he took part in before the Caliph Mahdi about 788 A.D. Somewhere about this time Abu Nuh of Anbar wrote a refutation of the Qur'an, referred to in the Catalogue of Ebedjesu of Nisibis, completed in A.D. 1298. Assemani mentions a work entitled "Discussion between the monk Abu Karah and the Commander of the Faithful—the Caliph Mamun" (A.D. 813–33). But, whatever may be the case so far as this discussion is concerned, the famous Apology for Christianity by Al-Kindi was written during the Caliphate of Al-Mamun. Mamun was notoriously heterodox. It was under him, indeed, that the edict against the dogma of the eternity of the Qur'an was published and enforced. The atmosphere prevailing then was an atmosphere of indifference to religion, and hence assaults on Islam—assaults both open and violent. But Muslims, too, were aroused into opposition. They resented, retorted, entered the path of warfare. Amr b. Bahr Al-Jahidh, the famous Muslim philosopher (d. A.D. 869), wrote a pamphlet entitled "Answer to Christians". Abu Isa Mohamed al Warraq, too, wrote a dissertation on the subject, which evoked a reply from the monophysite Yahya b. Adi of Takrit (d. A.D. 974). But—to our deep and lasting regret—both these works have perished.

The work, lying before us, is of great historic importance. Apart from being one of the most ancient in order of date, it has a two-fold significance. It is a semi-official defence of Islam, undertaken at the instance of the Caliph Mutawakkil, and is a work of high literary and historical merit and excellence.

Meagre and shadowy is our information regarding its author. All that we know about him is that he was a Christian convert to Islam; that Mutasim first discerned his merits, and made him a favourite at court; that Mutawakkil continued the royal patronage, and included him among the number of his table-guests; that he was a man of wide culture, refined tastes, profound learning, and was the instructor of Rhazes in the medical profession. Among his works are mentioned: "Paradise

of Medicine"; "Gentleness of Life"; "Utility of Food and Drink and Medicinal Herbs"; "Preservation of Health"; "Enchantment"; "Sacrification"; "Preparation of Food."

We cannot fix the date either of the composition of this book or of the author's death, but Dr. Mingana considers the year of his death to have been A.D. 854–55, and the composition of the text to have been, in all probability, shortly before his death. Numerous are the references to the Bible in this book. The author has evidently used the Syriac version. He speaks of a Biblical version by a certain Marcus, the "Tarjaman", but we can find no trace of him anywhere. "From the Fihrist (pp. 23–24) we know that the Old and New Testaments were translated into Arabic long before the tenth century, but we have no reason to identify the problematic Marcus as author of an Arabic book, with Marcus the Tarjaman spoken of in the present defence. On p. 306 the Fihrist mentions an earlier but still more problematic Marcus."

The first thing that strikes us in reading this book is that it is singularly free from heat and passion. It is not of the kind of controversial books which suffer passion to get the better of reason or of facts. It indulges in no vituperation or tirades. It suppresses or distorts nothing. It presents its case—supported by authorities and enforced by auguments. It is a sober, reasoned document, striving to get at the truth, and seeking to vindicate the honour of Islam. It bears witness to the fact that even in that age, and among people highly inflammable in matters religious, there were men of broad views, wide outlook, sober judgment. A mere glance at the contents suffices to show the different aspects from which the subject is approached and dealt with. The prophecies regarding the Prophet loom largest in the book. More than half-a-dozen chapters deal with them. And this is not to be wondered at; for the most effective defence would be one which drew its substance and strength from the Bible. To establish from Christian books that the advent of the Prophet was foretold would be to place Islam on a basis, sure, incontestable. Hence the elaboration; hence the weight attached to this argument. We shall not arrogate to ourselves the function of judging the soundness or otherwise of the arguments urged with such force and emphasis, but we shall content ourselves

with saying that they are by no means wanting in force or plausibility.

Religious discussion and disputations seem to be a thing of the past now. The modern world has very considerably extended the range of its interests, and widened the field of its activities. Religion, therefore, has no longer the same place or the same hegemonic sway as it had in the days gone by. And we read with wonder and amazement the controversial literature of past ages! Shall we add, with Gibbon, commiseration and contempt as well? In his essay on Rabelais that master of irony and satire—Anatole France—says: "Rabelais maintained his opinions, but not up to the burning point, reckoning in advance of and with Montaigne that to die for an idea is to put a very high value on one's opinions. Far from blaming him I praise him. Martyrdom must be left to those who, not knowing how to doubt, have in their very simplicity the excuse for their pig-headedness. Like the Serenus of M. Jules Lemaitre, one is shocked that men should be so positive about things which one has sought so long without finding, and when in the end one remains in doubt."

Yes! we have lost the positiveness, the certainty, the assuredness of the Age of Faith. And why then should we risk our lives for opinions, or dissipate our energies in proclaiming the truth of our beliefs? Doubt and uncertainty are the two unmistakable characteristics of modern times. And controversial literature thrives not in such surroundings! It belongs to an age radically and fundamentally different from ours. But it is none the less interesting and instructive study. It not only furnishes splendid examples of fiery passion, untamed fervour, sustained eloquence, but also reveals a world totally unlike ours.

Our author speaks of the victory of the Prophet as a mark of his prophetic office (Chapter X) and this chapter is well worth a perusal. If any miracle was needed to convince Unbelievers, or to sustain the courage of the Faithful, it was the wondrous success of the Prophet and his religion. In the success of Islam the Faithful saw the hand divine guiding, supporting, uplifting the weary toilers along the dreary, earthly path and leading them to the goal and crown of victory—victory such as no imagination could have

divined; no ambition could have fashioned or held up before its ardent vision. This was a miracle of miracles—a proof beyond cavil or dispute. In language at once passionate and lyrical, Tabari says: "Who has ever claimed such a victory, in the name of God, since the creation of the world by God? A victory comprising conditions and good qualities such as call to the creator of heaven and earth, abstraction from this world, encouragement for the world to come, prevention from associating other gods and helpers with God and from committing iniquity and impurity? A victory which was realized in such a decisive and unquestionable way, in all the countries and regions of the earth, on sea and land, from the extreme Sūs to the deserts of Turkistan and Tibet, by means of devotees and deeply pious leaders, and by proclamations in the name of the God of Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the rest of the Prophets" (p. 58). No less interesting is Chapter XV, where Tabari discusses the virtue and piety of some of the rulers of Islam. A religion which could so transform human nature and produce such striking results needs, so contends our author, no other or further proof of its truth and genuineness. His defence of the miracles of the Prophet calls for a brief notice. Charges of fraud and imposture are no new charges against the Prophet, but apparently, at the time of our author, they were urged with greater frequency and virulence. The answer of Tabari is short, simple, effective. "They (i.e., those that have reported the miracles), says Tabari, resemble in that the apostles of the Christ, who transmitted to the Christians portions of the gospel, and handed down to them the history of the Christ. Therefore, if those men are reliable and worthy of confidence in transmitting his history, they are not to be suspected in all that they have related of him; but if they are not reliable in that point, they are to be suspected in all that they have transmitted, and are deceivers, first of themselves, and then of all men." (p. 36.)

Reasoned, temperate, argumentative, historical, this book is throughout marked by a high level of culture, scholarship, broad-based catholicism. It never descends to rancour or vulgarity. It seeks to convince, not to attack or revile; to win over by persuasion, not to repel by violence. It is of a piece with the spirit of toleration, refinement, liberalism

which is the striking note of Islamic culture. Avicinna, Al-Farabi, Sana'i, Sa'ib, down to our own times, Mir Taqi, Zawq, Ghalib—the Muslim brotherhood is a brotherhood conspicuous for its justice, toleration and charity.

I shall conclude with one passage eminently characteristic of the spirit of this book.

"If a man from the *People of the Book* reviles one of the rules of the faith, and one of the practices of the Muslims, he will be grossly unjust to us, will repudiate and blame all the Prophets, and will expose himself to sin and punishment. If they blame sacrifices, they are inherited from Abraham and from all the prophets of his posterity. If they reprobate circumcision, it was practised by the Christ and by those who preceded Him. If they condemn divorce, their own Books will render their endeavour fruitless; and if they condemn swearing by God, it is the saying of the most High to His Prophets . . . If they blame the Holy war, Abraham fought the four kings who had made inroads into the country of Jazirah to invade its inhabitants . . ." (p. 153).

Here is no rancour, no bitterness, no malice, no ill-will. And such is the pervading spirit throughout. The translator is to be congratulated on the excellence of his translation, and on the immense service he has rendered to Islamic learning.

IX

THE TALES OF NASR-ED-DIN KHOJA

LITERATURE, when deserving of that name, is the mirror of national life. It is history without bias, without special pleading. It lays bare national feelings. It reflects national virtues. It describes those little trifling incidents and traits which are more telling than all the studied portraits of friends and foes. It shows the strength of faith, the spell of superstition, the force of prejudice, the warmth of friendship, the fierceness of hate ; in fine, all that we need to know about an individual or a race. Poetry and fiction are well-known sources of information ; perhaps they are purer sources of information than history written to support a cause, to exalt a hero, or to damn an opponent. Sir Charles Lyall —whose recent death scholarship bitterly mourns—has shown the importance of Arab poetry in this respect. His paper on Arabian Poetry is a piece of rare Scholarship. His edition of the *Mufaddhilliyat*—a monument of tireless industry and research—is a store-house from which the historian of Islam will draw incalculable help and light and receive sure and useful guidance. But if unquestioned is the place of poetry as a source of information, no less unquestioned is the place of fiction in that sphere.

I remember Professor Margoliouth telling me, years ago at Oxford, what a fine and faithful history of the social life of Islam might be constructed out of the *Kitabul-Aghani* of Abul Faraj-ul-Ispahani. The value and force of this observation I never realized until I began to translate Von Kremer's *Culturgeschichte* into English. Beyond reckoning is the debt which the German historian owes to Abul Faraj. Much as Von Kremer has used the Kitabul-Aghani, it is still virgin soil for scholars to till and to exploit. Some day this work, I trust, will be used for the purpose suggested by the Laudian Professor of Arabic at Oxford. But though this book is a sealed book to all that know not Arabic, familar are the Arabian Nights. Apart from their rich, magical language, their picturesque descriptions, their

imaginative flights, their strange, stirring scenes, their instances of thrilling generosity and of cruel horrors, their exciting love-stories and the noble sacrifices that love evokes and cheerfully endures—apart from all these, which capture the young and the old alike—they have a historic value and interest and use. They are neither more nor less than vivid, palpitating, glowing pictures of life at the Court, in the *harem*, in the houses of the rich and the poor. They are intensely human documents—full of light and animation. The Easterns have always had a passion for stories. They are a blend of the real and the ideal. At a coffee-house, in the *harem*, at a gathering of friends, in camps, or on hunting expeditions—when night spreads her dark veil around and the stars shine overhead—stories are told and heard with a relish and delight which we of this age can neither understand nor quite appreciate.

The author of the present tales is a Turk who lived some five hundred years ago. Nasr-ed-din was born probably after the middle of the XIVth Century, and was a native of Sivrihissar in the district of Angora. He was sent to school at Konia to study Law and Theology, and he qualified as a school-master and an *Imam* or leader of public prayers in the mosque. He held for a time the position of a *Kadhi* or Judge. His career coincides with that period of Turkish history when the Turkish conquerors were rapidly building up a vast Empire. While in the full tide of success, Bayazid received a check at the hands of Timur at Angora (1400 A.D.). Nasr-ed-din perhaps mourned the fate of the Turkish Sultan, but he thought it safer, certainly more prudent, to join the court of the victorious Timur. But, though a courtier, Nasr-ed-din was not an abject courtier. He possessed a strong and forceful character, and as such won the admiration and applause of his contemporaries. Respected and honoured while living he was not forgotten after his death. He rests at Akshehir—where still pilgrims stream in "to bless the turf that wraps his clay". What is the secret of Nasr-ed-din's enduring flourishing fame? What are his titles, his credentials? Assuredly they are contained in the volume lying before us. For centuries these tales have passed from mouth to mouth, pleasing, enticing the hearers with their art, irony, with their rapier-thrusts at the court and the Muslim judiciary, with their stinging,

biting criticism of the sinful pharisees and the false professors of Islam. The Khoja knew life, and knew full well the vagaries (in the language of Diderot) of that biped animal called man. They are mostly short stories, but they make their point with a compelling simplicity. We find here Turkish life, as it was, before it came into contact with modern civilization. It is a life free from guile and guilt, steeped in superstition, athirst for war and adventure, overshadowed by faith, and full of frolic. The Khoja himself is not a stern, frowning, self-complacent, beard-stroking Muslim, averse to jollity, but a good merry old soul, ready to enjoy sports, to take part in functions grave and gay. When a group of school-boys snatch away the Khoja's turban from his sapient head to play with it, the Khoja cheerfully accepts the situation, and, when asked the reason for his bare-headedness, answers good-humouredly that his *turban* has gone back to its youthful sportive days.

Beautiful is the Khoja's parable for young children (p. 96). It must be quoted *in extenso*. " The Khoja had a charming way of treating little children. At Akshehir they would come round him, delighted to listen to his pretty stories, or they would laugh and play with him. If they had any little trouble they would run with it to the Khoja. So it came to pass that one day they bought some walnuts, and as they could not agree how to divide them, they came to the Khoja and begged him to do it for them. The Khoja said: ' Do you wish me to divide them as God would do it, or as man ? ' The children all answered in the innocence of their hearts: ' As God would do it.' The Khoja then took two handfuls, and began to distribute them. To some he gave many, to some he gave only one, and to others he gave nothing at all. Of course they could not understand this, and asked him why he did it. ' My young friends,' said he ' the reason is quite plain. Supposing that I were to divide you up all into groups as I have done with the walnuts. Look at that boy over there. His father, Bedi-ud-din Effendi, is a very rich man, one of the notables of Akshehir, has a good wife and several fine children. Now look at Sinan-ed-din, that poor little mite who stands next to him. His father is very poor, and they are not happy at home, the man himself is a cripple and will never be able to do much work, and his wife is ill. Look again at Hasham-ed-din, standing opposite

to him. His family is in different circumstances from either of these. In fact, not one of you is the same as the other, and your Khoja least of all. There are no bounds to the goodness of God. He has given his servants a mind to think. He has shown them what is good and what is evil; what is wholesome and what is harmful. He has showered them with every grace to enable them to make a right use of their brains, their senses and bodily powers. He who does not know how to make a right use of them will get nothing. Hence the difference in the way God distributes His gifts.' "

Verily a sly hint at the unequal distribution of God's gifts! Almost an accent of complaint against God's justice! But something more still!—a lesson to Youth to use and not to waste its powers; to be up and doing; to remember that we shall only reap what we have sown. Penetrating, devastating criticism so lightly conveyed!

Take another instance. Tamerlane said to him: "You know, Khoja, that all the Caliphs of the Abbasids had characteristic titles; one was called *Mowaffiq-billah*, another *Motawakkel-el-Allah*, another *Motasim-billah*! If I had been one of them I wonder what would have been mine? The Khoja replied at once "O Lord of the world! There is no doubt about you. Your title would have been *Na'uz-billah* (God save us from this man)."

No judgment on Timur could have been more pitilessly outspoken! Throughout these tales are strewn literary and philosophic gems. Space forbids further extracts, but those interested in the history of man will find here a book worth its weight in gold.

X

THE SHAHNAMAH OF FIRDAUSI

A GREAT deal of legend has gathered round Firdausi, as legends usually do round great men. Within a hundred years of his death, truth and fiction were so deftly woven together, that it was not easy to disentangle one from the other. Persian historians relate (though without judgment or discrimination) the legends that were in circulation, and make no effort whatever to fashion a consistent, reliable account of their Great Epic Poet. We have these legends in all their conflicting diversities, and in rich, picturesque, enticing, romantic settings. It was reserved for Nöldeke and Ethé to evolve, out of the accumulated mass of legends and fairy-tales, a historical account of the author of the Shahnamah.[1] The result of their researches may be thus summarised. Firdausi was a *Dihquan*, or Squire, of Tus, and as such was a man of position and affluence. He was born A.D. 920 or thereabouts; became deeply interested in antiquarian research and folklore—an interest which was considerably heightened, amply sustained, and fully satisfied by the Book of Kings, completed in A.D. 957–8, by Abu Mansur-al-Mamari, from ancient sources, for Abu Mansur b. Abdur Razzaq, the then Governor of Tus. The passion thus aroused and stimulated led Firdausi to compose the national Epic. After twenty-five years of unwearying labour the first edition was completed in A.D. 999 and was dedicated to Mohamed b. Abi Bakr of Khalaijan. But the poet did not rest on his laurels. In or about 1010 A.D. he completed a second edition of this National Epic, and dedicated it this time to Sultan Mahmud. Shortly after this a quarrel ensued, and Firdausi fled from Gazni. Does

[1] *The Shahnamah of Firdausi* done into English by George Warner and Edmond Warner; Vol. VIII. Kegan Paul, Trench Trubner & Co., 1923.

not this recall the celebrated Hegira of Voltaire from the Court of Frederick? Firdausi then sought and secured the protection of one of the princes of the House of Buway (Bahauddin, or his son Sultan u'd-Dawla, who succeeded him in A.D. 1012, as Nöldeke thinks: Maju'd-Dawla abu Talib Rustum, as Ethé seems to believe), and composed for him his other great poem the Yusuf and Zulaikha. An old man of ninety or more, he returned to his native town Tus, where he died, A.D. 1020 or 1025. Besides the Shahnamah and the Yusuf and Zulaikha, he wrote lyrical poems which have been collected, edited and translated by Dr. Ethé in his *Firdausi als Lyriker*. To what does the Shahnamah owe its unique position and universal fame? Apart from the facts of which it is the repository, it is invaluable from the point of view of mythology and folk-lore—for its legends of ancient Persia from the beginning of memory, until the Arab conquest in the VIIth century A.D. It has yet another, and to my mind the most powerful, characteristic which has conferred upon it the glory and lustre of undying renown. The Shahnamah is a gospel of Persian patriotism; the hymn of Persian pride. In its pages the pent-up wrath of the Persian against the Arab domination flames forth into a red-hot glow. In its pages the glory of the Persian race, suppressed, overwhelmed, almost crushed, shines forth once again in its wondrous radiance. It is a noble patriotism, which, so to speak, transfigures the style of the poet, and endows it with supernatural vigour and force. Ibn Hazm, the Royal historian, has told us that the Persians were mainly responsible for the religious schisms which sprang up in the bosom of Islam. They strove to destroy Islam from within when open opposition was hopeless, inexpedient, impracticable. For centuries they patiently bore subjection to Arab rule. True, ripples here and there pointed to the ferment underneath. As early as the reign of the Caliph Muawiya, says Goldziher, we hear accents of political complaint, the hushed whispers of simmering revolt. In my *Essays*: *Indian and Islamic* I have fully dealt with this subject, and I shall not repeat what I have said there.

We can gauge the depth of their political degradation by the fact that not until after three hundred years of Arab rule did the Persians bring their neglected language to its rightful place of honour: for, with the conquest, Arabic

had become the official language, nay the language of culture and even of ordinary parlance. We are told that Arabic became the language of the people of Naisapur, as also of the people of Kom. We infer from the letters of Hamdani that even in Merv and Herat the entire correspondence was carried on in Arabic, and that Arabic was the adopted language of the higher circles. Even in Khorasan at one time Arabic supplanted Persian and reigned supreme.

Modern Persian literature, especially poetry, began however to flourish considerably in Khorasan during the first half of the Xth century, especially during the reign of the Samanid Prince Nasr II (A.D. 913–942). With the revival of Persian literature, the decline of Arab prestige and the waning of Arab political power, the reaction against Arab rule, never altogether absent, set in, in full force. The Arab supremacy, long questioned, was openly challenged and defied. The Persians and other races claimed and obtained equality of rights—nay more, succeeded in relegating their conquerors to a position of social insignificance and political obscurity. Islam's universal brotherhood proved a figment of the brain. Racial spirit conquered religious spirit, and made way for the birth, growth and development of the principle of Nationality, which constitutes a land-mark, distinguishing the modern from the mediaeval world. And this now widespread and augmenting spirit of Nationality was a natural, inevitable stage in the history of Civilization, for it was naught but a protest, reaction, revolt, against foreign rule and foreign domination.

It would be interesting, and instructive as well, to enquire and ascertain how far, among other contributory causes, the decline and fall of the Arab Empire was due to intense Arab national pride and arrogant aloofness.

The Shahnamah, then, is not only an epic of the highest poetical order—it is also a noble monument of Persian patriotism and an everlasting memorial of the Persian national antipathy to a foreign yoke.

No translation can convey the charm of the original. The Shahnamah has attained the highest water-mark of Persian poetical excellence. And who can capture and restore in translation its melodious and impassive resonance; its sweetness of diction; its thunderous reverberations; its

soul-stirring descriptions of men and their warfare; its high-soaring poetical flights, and, withal, its simple and all-subduing grace?

But this does not mean that the translator has not achieved a distinction of his own. He has done all save what is unattainable—to excel or even to equal the original.

XI

THE TRAGEDY OF KERBALA

POPULAR Muslim opinion has made Yazid, the son of Muawiya, a monster of iniquity. In its fierce wrath it has forgotten his amiable qualities and distinctive poetical talent. The poet Hafiz—the sweetest of Persian poets—begins his "Diwan" with a verse from a famous poem of this "universally condemned" Caliph. And those who have read his poems cannot but admire and applaud their vigour, their spontaneity, their enticing charm, their moving simplicity. Whatever else he may or may not have done—he has enriched Arabic Literature, and has handed down to the world a book of poems of everlasting renown. But, whatever his excellence as a poet, to the Muslim world Yazid's name is associated with the tragedy of Kerbala. The "Sunnis" condemn him; the "Shias" make it their business to shower annual curses on him and his kinsmen. The facts are briefly these: Yazid—the undisputed Caliph—was resisted by a band of Muslims headed by Al-Hussain, the son of Ali and grandson of the Prophet.

What the Caliph asked for was allegiance, and allegiance was refused to him. This small band was powerful, and threatened to become still more powerful and fierce, in volume and intensity. If not put down, it might have become the rallying-point of a mighty rebellion; and rebellion no government permits. The "de facto" Government of Yazid tried persuasion, and that proving unavailing, it ultimately used force to suppress the rebellion in its initial stage, but force, to be sure, to no greater extent than was absolutely necessary for putting the offending band under arrest.

Dr. Brunnow, in his masterly monograph on the "Kharijites," has defended the action of Yazid, and has contended, not without show of reason, that no government would silently watch the growth and development of forces working for its ruin and destruction. We leave this theory

alone—though it is of interest to know that such a view has been set forth by a scholar of repute. But there is one thing to which I must call attention. It is nowhere stated that the ruling Caliph—Yazid—gave his generals, Ibn Ziyad, Shimr, and the rest of them, orders to molest or to kill the grandson of the Prophet. What they were bidden to do was to put him under arrest, in case of his refusing to do homage to the Caliph. In slaying Husain, therefore, they acted without authority. In fact, they acted in contravention of the order issued to them. As to the hideous tales of the torture and cruelty to which Husain and his kinsmen were subjected, we have not the slightest indication of any such thing in any reliable historical work of an early date.

Dr. Wüstenfeld points out that Abu Mikhnaf is the first to speak of the tragedy of Kerbala, and Abu Mikhnaf cannot be set down in the rank of sober historians, but must be treated as "a coffee house gossip, unworthy of credit." To him must be traced the beginnings of the fanciful legends and woeful tales which the Muslim world, later, magnified and multiplied with true Eastern luxuriance. In the romance called "The Death of Husain" we have a book of rare importance. It contains almost all the legends and fairy-tales current in the Muslim world. Thanks to Dr. Wüstenfeld, we have a German translation of this most fascinating work. (*Der Tod des Husein ben Ali*, Göttingen, 1883.)

And popular fancy has lovingly accepted what legend has lavishly invented. From a political point of view the act of Yazid's minions was a piece of fateful folly. Thus does an Arab historian—the famous Al-Fakhiri—describe Yazid's reign: "His reign, according to the more correct statement, lasted three years and six months. In the first year he slew Al-Hussain, the son of Ali; and in the second year he sacked Medina, and looted it for three days; and in the third year he attacked the Ka'ba."

But the tragedy of Kerbala was the worst of his offending acts. It sent a thrill of horror throughout the Muslim world. The question of Government *de facto* and Government *de jure*, was too subtle and refined a question to be understood or appreciated by "*profanum vulgus*." Enough! the grandson of the Prophet had been slain. It stirred universal sorrow; provoked universal indignation. No justification was conceivable, possible. No plea, admissible, arguable.

The House of Omayya was condemned, and condemned beyond appeal.

It is this tragic event—the death of Husain—which is yearly rehearsed on the 10th of Mohurrum, throughout the Muslim world. Wherever the Shiah community exists, we witness on this day a sad and moving scene, " the wailing chant, the sobbing multitudes, the white raiment red with blood from self-inflicted wounds, the intoxication of grief and sympathy."

They say tears dry, and sorrows soften, and griefs die and the heart forgets; but in this instance—the Mohurrum day—tears well up, sorrows revive, woes, suppressed for full twelve months, become, at a moment's notice, stridently vocal, and, who knows, perchance for a trifling consideration. But—with the process of the sun—do not many things turn from serious into comic?

XII

MY CRITICS

NOWHERE is the sway of faith more powerful or more complete than with us, Muslims. Our politics and religion are one. Our law and religion are one. Our whole life, in fact, from cradle to grave, is closely intertwined with faith. This has its uses, and the most striking of these uses is our unquenchable religious ardour, which ever shines in undimmed splendour. The otherwise lethargic Muslim of to-day is always ready to take up arms in defence of his faith. And it is always gratifying to me to watch his fiery fervour—his scornful impatience—when matters connected with faith stand in real or imaginary peril. These qualities are noticeable, not only in lonely individuals, but in the masses of my brethren-in-faith. But if this fierce passion in the domain of religion has its advantages, it has serious drawbacks too. It shuts us out from influences which might stimulate thought and widen our intellectual horizon. It makes us indifferent to the growing needs of the times, and flings us hopelessly into too narrow a channel of thought.

The intellectual efflorescence of Islam was mainly due to its readiness and capacity to accept and absorb those Hellenistic influences which pervaded the countries overrun by the faithful. The Muslims did not resist but yielded to those influences. And orthodox Islam bowed to the inevitable. It has been aptly said: To Hellenism Islam gave its language and opportunities of wide diffusion—whereas to Islam Hellenism repaid its debt by placing at its disposal its vast and priceless collection of the arts and sciences. The age of Faith was followed by the age of Reason. The victory of the one involved the defeat of the other. And the glory of the Muslim civilization is the glory of the doubting, reasoning, challenging Islam—the Islam steeped in Hellenistic culture. That Islam shunned no enquiry—stood for the right of freedom of thought and fought for freedom of expression. Witness the countless Muslim sects!

Recall the freedom of thought under Mamun! Ponder over the toleration of Muslim Spain!

But, leaving aside past history, what is the striking note of our Age? The note of freedom, to be sure. Have we benefited either by our own history or by that priceless gift of our age—the supremest of all gifts—the gift of freedom? Assuredly not! Illumination of mind and purity of heart—the two divine purposes of all religions—and *thus* of ours too—do we hold by them? Answer the question yourself. The main purpose of religion seems to me now to be: antipathy to those that are not of our faith, and resistance to light and charity.

We fly at the throats of those who dare to express opinions counter to our traditional notions, our long-maintained beliefs. The slightest departure is resented, reviled, condemned. Must there be no honest doubt in the world?—no honest differences of opinion? 'Uniformity' means intellectual death, an end to thought, farewell to freedom of expression. Surely we do not wish to revert to the days when compulsion, in matters of opinion, was the order of the day! Past, I trust, past beyond recall, are those days now! Let us show charity towards those who differ from us —even in matters religious—convert them by argument, and not by the hatchet. But if we plead earnestly for toleration in this respect, we pray still more earnestly for honesty in criticism. Four years ago, when I was at Arrah in connection with the Dumraon Case, a dear friend of mine came to me in great agitation and told me that I had been attacking Islam. I was staggered—for nothing could be further from my thoughts than an attack upon the religion I so dearly love. I protested my innocence and asked for the offending passage—the subject of so cruel an indictment. My friend had never verified the complaint. He had taken it on trust, and I was convicted without proof. Such is the sort of criticism to which we are heirs here. Anger of one, vanity of another, jealousy of a third—these are some of the sources of criticisms with which I have been always assailed. I abhor, and I have always abhorred, controversy, for controversy has never been the medium for the discovery or recovery of truth. I have, therefore, no inclination to launch into controversy. My books are my witnesses in refutation

of the charges recklessly made against me. I shall refer here to two instances of recent criticisms of my writings. In my paper on the tragedy of Kerbala, I mentioned the opinion of a distinguished German savant who looked at that tragedy from a novel point of view, and who condoned the action of Yazid. It was not my opinion, but that of Dr. Brünnow, that I was stating: and yet what wrath I drew upon my head! Irrepressible was the indignation of the Shiahs—unrestrained the torrent of their abuse. Evidently it is a sin—unpardonable, inexpiable—to mention a heresy, even if it be one against an orthodox opinion based on a nursery tale and sustained by coffee-house gossip. Such is the spirit of enlightened criticism to-day! But even if reference to a heresy be reprehensible,—does honest criticism defend or justify wilful suppression or perversion of facts?

I am told that I have represented the Prophet as animated by worldly motives—playing a distinctly worldly part at Medina. Instead of holding that view, I have emphatically opposed it. This is what I say: "I do not agree with all this (namely, that the man who just left Mekka, and the man who now entered Medina, seem to be two different men). I have fully discussed this subject in my paper on 'Mohamed—the Prophet of God.' The only difference, if difference there be, is that now the scope of the Prophet's work was considerably extended, and that he was called upon to face and solve problems which could not have arisen in Mekka, where intense was the opposition, bitter the persecution, and where the Prophet was without any proper resources or effective support. But, as Hell himself points out, even in Medina, his life was simple and austere—free from pomp and parade of power. The Prophet—at Mekka as at Medina—was dominated by one passion, and one only—the glory of Islam. The march of events added to his prophetic duties the burden of a temporal chief. Could he shirk or shrink from it? Had he not numerous precedents in the history of the Israelites? But who can honestly charge him with one single act of cruelty or selfishness? He was ruler with the self-effacement of a saint—a religious chief free from the pretensions of a Pope—a man who led and bent all to his will by the sheer force of his magnetic, all-subduing personality. Such a one did Mohamed remain

to his last breathing moment—a beacon-light unto the end of time."

And in the same paper, I again say:—

"I would specially refer the reader to Dr. Krehl's Mohamed (Leipzig, 1884) and to Dr. Arnold's Preaching of Islam (Constable, 1913). Both these works combine scholarship with sympathy, and throughout show an understanding spirit rare in European writers. To both of these scholars Mohamed is a genuine Prophet of God—full of divine ecstasy; bent on fulfilling his divine mission. Dr. Arnold (p. 34) has exposed the popular Christian fallacy which sees two diametrically different persons in the Mohamed of Mekka and the Mohamed of Medina. Dr. Krehl's life is one continuing tribute to the undeviating zeal of the Prophet. Dr. Arnold's book should be more widely known, and Dr. Krehl's should be made accessible to those who know no German."

Could the most ardent Muslim say more?

I have laboured all my life to establish the claims of Islam on incontrovertible facts—not on baseless legends, and to proclaim the glory of the Prophet on the strength of his wondrous achievements and not on pious fiction. If any proof of my love of Islam was needed, I would point to my published books and writings and my library of Islamic Learning—unique in Bengal. Let my critics show their credentials, cite their proof.

XIII

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE AMONG THE ARABS

Of the civilisation of a people no test is surer than the status they accord to woman. When she is endowed with full legal rights, and stands by the side of her husband—not merely as the mother of his children, but the mistress of his household—not merely the first among his attendants, but his life-long friend and companion—then, and then only, the people among whom the relationship subsisting between the sexes has developed on these lines may be said to be civilised. Of this proposition early Arab annals offer convincing proof.

During the highest bloom of Arab nationality, woman was not only man's equal, but was not infrequently the object of a chivalrous devotion. But, with growing political degeneration, the social conditions worsened too, and the *harem-system* began to manifest its degrading influences. The portrait of a free, courageous wife, with an independent will of her own, vanishes and, in her stead, step into light the fair captives of the *harem*, immersed in toilet, in trifles, in sensual pleasures, shorn of all dignified pride—the brightest ornament of emancipated womanhood.

The modern Arab woman is pretty, but generally not educated; virtuous, but not always from a consciousness of the value of chastity. But whatever may be her position now—far different is the picture of her which has come down to us from the early days of Islam, or from those of Arab antiquity.

Harith Ibn Auf, the powerful chief of the Murra tribe, decided to woo a bride. He asked a friend if he thought any Arab chief would dare refuse the hand of his daughter to him. Yes indeed! said he. And when Harith questioned who that proud one might be—his friend replied: Aus Ibn Haritha of the tribe of Tāyy. He straightway ordered a slave to get two dromedaries ready for him, and, when ready, he rode away with his friend to Aus. Aus met him just in front of his house. He greeted the new-comers and

enquired the business which had brought them there. I come to seek a bride of thee—said Harith. Thereupon rejoined the other—to the wrong place hast thou come, and angrily made back for his house. His wife, who was of the tribe of Abs, asked him who the stranger was that had stopped, and to whom he had spoken so curtly and sharply. He told her that it was Harith Ibn Auf—the most prominent figure of the entire neighbourhood—that he had come to seek a bride of him, and that he had peremptorily refused him and turned away from him, taking him to be mad. The wise woman bitterly reproached her peevish husband, and vehemently remonstrated with him for treating in such an off-hand fashion so distinguished a tribal chief, and argued with him until he yielded and promised to ride after the two strangers and induce them to return home with him. This he did. He speedily set out, overtook them at a little distance, and begged them to return and accept his hospitality. They consented. Aus, after he had seen to the comfort of his guests, sent for his three daughters.

To the eldest he spoke first. He told her what the matter was, and asked her if she would accept Harith as her husband. She replied: O father! I am not pretty, and I have many faults. Besides my suitor is neither my cousin nor yet a neighbour of mine who would, for thy sake, show consideration to me. Nor must I forget that, if I please him not, he will divorce me, and then eternal will be my disgrace. Aus said: may God bless thee, my daughter! Thou art right. In the same strain he spoke to his second daughter, and she too, like her elder sister, declined the offer. To Bahysa, the youngest, he now turned with the same proposal, and this was her reply: I am pretty and am well-versed in handicraft. Of noble descent am I. Fair and tall too. Despite all this—were my husband to put me aside and divorce me, may God punish him! Her father said: God bless thee! He then went to his guest and said: I give my daughter Bahysa as a bride to thee. Now preparations were made for the wedding. The father of the bride had a large tent pitched, and when everything was ready the bride was conducted to the bridegroom. But, when he wanted to approach her, she repelled him, saying: what! here, with my father and my brothers and sisters, shall I celebrate my nuptial day? Never. Thereupon Harith gave orders to start. Tents were taken

down; camels were saddled and loaded and lo! the small caravan was on its way home. After they had gone some distance, Harith halted for the night. When again he approached his young wife, she repelled him, saying: what! dost thou treat me like a slave-girl whom one purchases or takes as a captive of war. By God! thou shalt not embrace me until my marriage is festively and fittingly celebrated in the midst of thy tribesmen, with camels and sheep slaughtered for the feast, to which are invited guests from all the Arab tribes. Thereupon they continued their journey until they reached the homeland of the tribe. A feast was prepared. Guests were invited. Camels and sheep were killed and roasted. Once again Harith approached his wife, but she, as before, repelled his advances, saying: How findest thou the time to fondle and caress women, when the Arabs outside are mutually extirpating themselves, and the two tribes of Abs and Dhubyan are well-nigh on the verge of extermination. Hasten, then, to them; reconcile the two tribes; and then come home to thy wife, who longingly and lovingly will await thy arrival. Harith, forthwith, rode to the two hostile tribes, and restored peace among them. The slain on either side were counted, and blood-money was arranged to be paid to the tribe which showed an excess of slain over the other. Harith pledged himself to the blood-money, assessed at 3,000 camels which he undertook to deliver in course of three years. After this was done, Harith returned home—praised, applauded by all. His wife Bahysa received him in her loving, caressing arms and bore him as many sons as daughters.[1]

The classical finish and noble simplicity of this charming little story alone show that it comes from the best days of Arab Chivalry, and present us with an ideal portrait of the Arab woman as she was then conceived, painted, described. It would perhaps be rash to accept this story as a true presentation of facts, but doubtless it does convey a fairly accurate idea of the Arab woman as entertained in those far-off days. The story may be set down as one, in all probability, belonging to the first or second century of the Muslim era. It was an age when they loved to invent such romantic, moving tales of Arab antiquity, or of Beduin life, to cheer and enliven friendly gatherings at eventide. Both at the court of

[1] Kitabul-Aghani, IX, 149–151.

Damascus, and later at that of Baghdad, such stories were highly relished.

The qualities expected of a woman, to please and attract men, were not merely personal beauty, but noble descent, intelligence, cultivated taste, forceful character. The most shining embodiment of these qualities was Ayasha, daughter of Talha, grand-daughter of the Caliph Abu Bakr, and niece of Ayasha, wife of the Prophet. She was the prettiest and proudest woman of her time. She never wore the veil, and to her husband (Musab), who bitterly taunted her for it, she answered : " on me God has set the seal of beauty, and I rejoice when my beauty is seen and the mercy of God is therein acknowledged. Never shall I cover my face, for no flaw or fault finds a place in God's work." This led to a scene with her jealous husband, and being of a fiery temper she broke off all connection with him for a time. The husband went to war, and returned victorious. Ayasha, however, felt the estrangement deeply, and secretly wished it would end. A freed woman suggested the return of her husband from war as the right and proper moment for peace and reconciliation. Ayasha went to meet him ; congratulated him on his return ; wiped the dust off his face and coat-of-mail, and when the husband said that he feared that the smell of the rusty iron coat-of-mail and of the weapons might be offensive to her she rejoined : By God, it is sweeter and lovelier to me than the musk. Musab, her second husband, gave her a dowry of 50,000 Dirhams. After him she married a third time ; and her husband, one of the wealthiest and noblest Omayyads, presented her a dower of 1½ million Dirhams, and to it he added another half-a-million as a gift. Even her third husband she survived. When he died, she sang the funeral dirge, conveying therein that she never would marry again.[1] Such repeated marriages were by no means rare, nor did they cause the slightest scandal. Atiqa, belonging to one of the noblest families of Mekka, married three times ; and when, on the death of her third husband, a noble Mekkan sought her hand, she replied that she was by no means inclined to outlive her fourth husband.[2] As all her husbands had fallen in battle, the saying arose " he who wished speedily to enter Paradise let him marry Atiqa."

[1] Aghani, X, 54. [2] Aghani, XVI, 133

In the choice of husbands women enjoyed the most perfect freedom. There is even a case on record of a widow of the Caliph (Saffah) marrying a private gentleman of poor circumstances, though of distinguished lineage.[1] Suspecting an intrigue with a slave-girl, she divorced him in the end.

I shall conclude with one more instance; namely, that of Sukaina, who distinguished herself, not merely by marrying several times, but by making complete freedom of action a condition-precedent to her marriages.[2] On her third marriage she stipulated that she was in no way to be interfered with in her freedom of action, and that her husband was to give in to her in everything. She enforced this stipulation so vigorously that her husband had no alternative but to divorce her. She married a fourth time, but this marriage too was soon dissolved.[3]

In the social intercourse of the sexes there was no check or hindrance. Men called on women without hesitation, and women received them without the least fear of comment—not only their relatives but even strangers.[4] They went out when they pleased, and enjoyed with men the right of praying at the mosque at the stated time of prayers [5]—a practice which fell into disuse by the third century of the A.H.

The right of choosing husbands was conceded to them, and so was the right of refusing those that did not please them. Unanimous was the opinion of the oldest jurists that a wife never could be bought; that the presents which her father or other kinsmen made to her, before marriage, were her own separate property.[6] Finally the jurists expressly acknowledged the woman's right to bind her husband, before marriage, not to take a second wife during her life-time.

Although the instances cited above refer to women of the highest circles of society, the statement that the position of women, in less exalted spheres, was no less favourable, hardly calls for special proof. If anything, it was, in point of fact,

[1] Aghani, IV, 89. [2] Aghani, XIV, 170, 171.

[3] Ibn Khallikan, Vol. I, p. 581. "Maimuna, daughter of Al-Harhit Ibn Hazn and member of the tribe of Hilal was married to Masud Ibn Umar-ul-Thakafi in the time anterior to the announcement of Islam. Divorced by her husband she became the wife of Abdul Uzza, and on his death she was espoused by the Prophet, A.H. 5. She was the last of his wives." Ibn Khall., Vol. I, p. 580 (note 1).

[4] Aghani, XIX, 161. [5] Bukhari, 553, 555, 567.

[6] Muatta, III, 8.

freer and more independent—only as might be expected, the wife had to attend to domestic work.[1] In the humble hut of the peasant; in the tent of the dwellers of the desert; in the houses of the modest commoners and the simple artisan, she exercised an influence perhaps greater by far than that exercised by the wife in the palace of the rich where the master could easily forget the displeasure of one in the embraces of another. For those the wife was the ruler, with unlimited powers in the domestic circle. And thus it need not surprise us to find Abul Atiyyah (of the time of Harun-ul-Rashid) referring thus to his wife in a poem :—

"Ah! For her will I gladly renounce all life's prizes and all the world's wealth."

In the beginning of Islam the status of woman was indeed high, honourable, independent. For sometime woman was even the object of chivalrous devotion. Men sang of her in rapturous terms and wove around her all the enchantment of romance. In the legends of the North Arabian tribes, nothing is reckoned nobler, more glorious, more worthy of imitation, than the daring feats of a warrior who, in defiance of all danger, nay, at the very risk of his life, seeks to protect women from shame and lust. And in a heroic defence of this sort does Antar, the hero of the North Arabian legends, end his life, loved and honoured by all. In an attack he saved the women of his tribe from dishonour, and single-handed held out against the hostile troops until his tribesmen had effected a safe retreat. Though mortally wounded, he stuck to his post on his charger, at the mouth of a defile leaning on his spear. There, in that position, he breathed his last. While thus holding his post, women managed to get safely back to their tribal camp, where the enemy did not venture to pursue them. Only when the movement of the horse brought the corpse down, was it perceived how even in death he continued his yeoman service to his very own. Unworthy and contemptible it was always held to be, to wound or kill a woman.

[1] Spinning was the work which women did in the highest circles. Maarri speaks of it in one of his epigrams: Teach her to spin, to weave, to do embroidery work. I might observe here that the work which I translate as 'embroidery work' perhaps only means 'crotchet work,' for it is well-known that 'embroidery work' was only introduced into Europe in the XVIth century. It is said to have made its way first in southern countries—Spain and Italy. I will not venture to decide whether this was a European invention or an importation from the East.

When the wife of a rebel was killed under orders of Abdullah Ibn Zubair, the rival Caliph at Mekka, a poet, expressing his indignation, concluded thus : [1] " Ordained for us men it is to kill or to be killed, but for women naught else is ordained but to trail the train of their dresses." And another poet thus speaks of his wife : " I see husbands strike their wives, but may my hand wither were I to raise it against Zainab.....Zainab is the sun, while naught but stars are the rest of womankind. Before the splendour of her peerless beauty not one single star doth man notice." [2] Even in the earliest period of Muslim warfare, it was settled law that women and children of the enemy—even non-Muslims—were not to be killed or ill-treated unless they actually took part in war.

The disgrace of having lowered the high position of women belongs, in the first instance, to the morose, fanatical theologians of Islam. It was not due, to be sure, to the fact that they were indifferent or insensible to feminine charms—for they had their own well-stocked *harems*—but outside that delightful little paradise—they loved to affect a thorough contempt for things earthly, and to express a pious horror at the sinfulness of the world and the levity of the fair sex. For this reason, perhaps, one of the oldest traditionists has collected, with apparent relish, several traditions which purport to say [3] that women for the most part will go to Hell. The pious traditionist has obviously forgotten that Mohamed has peopled his paradise with *Huris* of unfading beauty, youth and grace. But these attacks of the theologians and the fanatics would not, of themselves, have been powerful enough to effect so complete a transformation in the social status of women as that which later followed had there not been other causes contributing to that end. The gradual decline of the old Arab aristocracy appears to have dealt a serious blow at the dignity of womanhood. The old families of Mekka who, during the first century, regarded their right to rule as a hereditary right, rapidly disappeared during the unceasing wars, and gave place to a mixed race wanting alike in purity of descent and in refinement of feelings. Equally responsible for rapid degeneration, I doubt not, were frequent marriages between close relations. This was felt

[1] Aghani, IV, 227.
[2] Ibn Khall., under Kadhi ' Shuraih ' ; Ibn Hamdun, II, 207.
[3] Bukhari, 21. Muatta, I, 337.

early enough, for it tended to prejudically affect physical development. Thus Omar I is once said to have observed, and expressed, in an assembly of the Quraish, their small, undersized stature; whereupon they rejoined that it was due to the extreme frequency of marriages between relations (cousins). Omar I is reported to have recommended the discontinuance of this practice. A poet, speaking of a man whose physical strength he intended to emphasise and applaud, says: His father was not a cousin of his mother.[1] The idea of transmission of hereditary defects is illustrated in the remarkable statement that a curious defect in speech, called *Rattah*, a certain clumsiness of tongue, at the beginning of speech, was a peculiarity of the noblest families—a peculiarity which was transmitted as a hereditary gift.[2] Whatever it may be, other causes also, to which we shall allude later, soon hastened the moral and physical declension of the Arab race. Noble figures—such as we have described—became rarer and rarer. Zubaida, the cultured wife of Harun, was the last of the band of the noble, self-asserting, high-born lady of the old aristocratic type. The poems of a certain Hamida, handed down to us, best illustrate the proud consciousness of these aristocratic ladies. She was constrained to wed a man of low descent. In a satire on him she said: A full-blooded Arab woman am I—born of a noble mother. A noble child do I bring to the world. If such a one—know 'tis mine. But if a monster—know equally 'tis his.[3] Soon, indeed, such women disappeared, and this not merely because the old aristocratic Arabs dwindled and died away, but also because such women were no longer in demand. They, therefore, as a class, became extinct. The idea of nobility of descent, both on the father's and the mother's side—so tenaciously held in earlier times—gradually lost its hold on the popular mind. In the beginning of the Caliphate there is not one single instance of the son of a concubine (even when the father was a Caliph) succeeding to the Caliphate. An Omayyad Caliph attempted it, but unsuccessfully.[4] While in the beginning they despised the sons of concubines; later they altogether blinked at or

[1] Isphahani, Muhadherat, I, 207.
[2] Ibn Hamdun, I, 79. Lane: Lexicon, Sub 'Rattah.'
[3] Aghani, XIV, 130.
[4] Von Kremer, *Cullurgeschichte*, Vol. I, 393.

ignored descent on the mother's side.[1] Thus in the place of *marriages of equals*—on which great emphasis was laid earlier—the rule of mistresses and courtesans set in. The legitimate wife could not successfully combat or quell the growing influence of the fair sinners deeply versed in all the arts of seduction and conquest. The pleasure-loving husbands found these absolutely irresistible; and never, indeed, seems the thought of securing legitimate children to have disturbed their smooth current of pleasure and shame, or to have drawn them to their lawfully-wedded wives. In this the Muslim Law is not altogether free from blame, for it put no difficulty in the way of acknowledgment of illegitimate children, nor did it worry itself with the question whether the mother was of noble or of ignoble descent. Nor could any such question be seriously or decorously raised, for most of the Caliphs themselves were sons of Greek or Persian slave-girls. The greater the laxity, the more jealous and rigorous grew the watch placed upon the legitimate but neglected wives. This marks the first step in the history of the real *Harem system*—so degrading to womankind—which has made Eastern womanhood—so lavishly endowed with all the gifts of nature—what it is to-day. It is not possible precisely to lay one's finger on the exact date when so deep and tremendous a transformation took place, for such changes occur slowly and unobserved, making the boundary line scarcely discernible where the old order vanished, yielding place to the new. But so much we can assert, that the change in the social position of women was effected some time between the end of the Omayyad rule and the Caliphate of Harun-ul-Rashid.[2]

When Mukhtar (a politico-religious party-leader who, in the first half of the first century of the A.H., caused a great deal of trouble, and obtained even temporary possession of Medina), on taking possession of Medina, repaired to the mosque and ascended the pulpit to address the assembled populace there, he is reported to have said: "you have chosen singing-girls as your companions and taken to eunuchs with delight."[3] We can infer from this that the introduction

[1] Ibn Khall., II, 210, under Zain-ul-Abidin. Kamil, Mubarrad, 299.

[2] Goldziher, M. S. I, 124. "In the history of the decline of morals it is notable that Mamun legalised *muta marriages* by a proclamation which he was soon compelled to withdraw." Ibn Khall., IV, 36.

[3] Kutb-ul-Surur, MS., Fol. 148.

of eunuchs was then regarded as a foreign innovation. The old prejudice against eunuchs continued still later.[1] This hateful fashion of using eunuchs to guard the *Harem* [2] came into existence, for the first time, under the Omayyad Caliphs, presumably in imitation of the Byzantine court, or of the Persian kings. We know, indeed, that trade in eunuchs was entirely in the hands of the Byzantine slave-dealers. In the beginning, eunuchs may have been employed in rich houses, as articles of luxury, to attend to womenfolk, but with altered conditions they were transformed into imperious warders and supercilious supervisors.

Next to eunuchs, that which contributed most to the degradation of womankind was the slave-trade. With the conquest of Syria and Persia slave-girls came to Arabia in much larger numbers than had been the case before. When later the residence of the Caliph was transferred to Baghdad, it was especially the Turkish tribes of the North-Eastern frontier—conspicuous for their physical beauty—which sent in numerous contingents of attractive young women to Baghdad, to be sold as slaves. It was then a very profitable and by no means a degrading trade to purchase young women; to train them carefully in music and song, and then to sell them, at enormous prices, to rich men. The houses of the slave-dealers were the meeting-places of rich youths, who amused themselves with the girls—full of music, song and fun. Love-affairs were not altogether absent from these abodes of shame and lust, but these generally ended in either the purchase of the slave-girl for an extravagant sum or in the ultimate ruin and penury of the lovers. Both the slave-dealers and the slave-girls were adepts in the art of money-making, and they reaped a rich harvest.[3] In Baghdad and also in

[1] Ibn Taghribardi, I, 611. [2] Ibn Taghribardi, I, 148.

[3] The author of the *Kitabul Mowashsha*, in the chapter dealing with the social conditions of Baghdad, sounds a note of warning against the snares of singing slave-girls. He says: "if one of them sees a rich youth in a company she tries to infatuate him. She casts amorous glances at him; she sings to him; she drinks the leavings out of his cup; flings kisses at him until she captures him in her meshes and he falls desperately in love with her. . . . Then she sends messages to him and pursues her cunning ways. She lets him know that for him she is robbed of her sleep and never ceases to pine. She sends him a ring; a lock of hair; a piece of her nail; a little chip of wood from her lute; a fragment of her tooth-brush; a bit of sweet-scented incense (Loban) which is meant for a kiss; a short letter, folded up and tied with a chord of her lute, moistened with a few drops of tears, sealed

the large towns of Iraq these houses were the most favourite resorts of frivolous and light-minded youths. The description of one such place of business has come down to us where a rich slave-dealer, named Ibn Zamin—apparently a Persian or an Indian—living under the Caliph Mansur—received his numerous customers and lovers of his slave-girls—visits which always meant a rich flow of gold to the house. His slave-girls—one outshining the other—freely mixed with the guests; sang songs or played music before them, or received musical instruction in their presence. Salma (surnamed Zaraqa, the blue-eyed) was the *prima donna* of the house. Besides her, two other girls of this establishment (Sa'da and Rubaiha) are expressly mentioned. Very loose must have been the relations between the sexes there, for the beautiful slave-girls were not restrained by any sense of modesty in their intercourse with their rich, money-lavishing lovers. No favour was indeed withheld if only the necessary gold was forthcoming. Alongside of the *Café chantant* of Ibn Zamin [1] there was yet another *place of meeting*, at this time, at Kufa—the meeting-house of Zuraiq—where Suhaiqa held sway. Between the two *honest* men there was a violent spirit of rivalry, in which even the governor often took the side of Ibn Zamin. This honest man did excellent business with his charming slave-girls. One of his girls, Rubaiha, he sold for 100,000 Dirhams; another, Sa'da, for 90,000 Dirhams and the beautiful Zaraqa for 80,000 Dirhams. This Zaraqa was purchased by a youth whose father was the governor

with *Ghatija* and impressed with her signet-ring, bearing on it an appropriate maxim or proverb. Once in her complete control, she begins asking for valuable presents, such as: materials for dress from Aden; curtains from Nishapur; garments from Angog; Turbans from Sus; silken waist bands; shoes; sandals from Kanbaja; head-ornaments set with jewels; bangles; valuable ruby rings. Not infrequently she feigns illness. She has herself treated or bled without the slightest cause. All this, indeed, with one object; namely, to obtain presents from her worshipper—presents such as amber-scented shirts; chemises fragrant with musk; expensive lozenges; neck-chains of camphor or cloves soaked in wine, etc., etc. Unending are her demands for presents. The lover's purse exhausts itself, money is gone and the purse lies empty. Perceiving that there is nothing more to be got, she shows signs of impatience; and makes her lover feel her change of attitude. She speaks unkindly to him, and seeks a pretext for breaking with him." *Kitabul-Mowashsha*, MS., Folio 91."

[1] Aghani, XIII, 128. The name Suhaiqa is not calculated to assure us of the respectability of this place of business.

of Basra. The ill-advised son sought to keep the affair back from his father as long as he could. But he got wind of it, and one day he surprised the loving pair. Zaraqa scarcely had time to conceal herself. The old man made a fearful scene, and overwhelmed his son with taunts and reproaches. The son hardly knew how to appease his angry father. He made a sign to Zaraqa, who suddenly appeared on the scene; threw herself round the neck of her old father-in-law, kissed him, caressed him, and succeeded in so enchanting him, that he was completely won over to her side. There was reconciliation and forgiveness.

More and more were the rich and powerful drawn to these seductive priestesses of the enlivening arts, and instead of seeking the hands—as in the days of yore—of girls of good birth and breeding—they purchased pert and pretty slave-girls who united with the charm of good looks the careless, sunny temper of the artist. Thus Mahdi, when still Crown-Prince, purchased a pretty singing girl for 17,000 Dinars, and by her had his daughter Olayya,[1] who distinguished herself by rich artistic gifts and accomplishments.[2]

With but few exceptions the later rulers pursued the very same course as Mahdi. Light-minded, frivolous women ruled the palaces and fashioned the tone therein. This was a veritable misfortune. Numerous instances show what laxity of manners these women introduced in the best circles of society.[3] Polygamy, too, may have been largely responsible for it, by weakening and destroying the feminine ethical sensibility. In spite of this and other evils, oriental polygamy has been wholly misjudged and improperly condemned. At the time of the rise of Islam it was an institution consonant with the then existing conditions of popular life and society. For this reason, precisely, we find polygamy prevalent among all the civilized nations of antiquity. It will easily be conceded that at that stage of human history, when the tribal system reigned supreme, and there existed no strong bond binding the individual tribes—such as generally leads to the formation of a state—every tribe, every family, had to hold itself in readiness for self-defence against the rest. To defend itself successfully, it was imperative that

[1] Aghani, XIII, 131.
[2] Aghani, XIII, 114, 115; Ibn Khall., I, 317, note 2.
[3] Aghani, XI, 98, 99; Aghani, XVIII, 185.

the tribe should be strong, and able to muster a sufficient number of efficient men. This could only be done by securing the support and assistance of other tribes through kinship or other alliances. Furthermore, it was of imperious necessity that every tribe and every family should do its utmost to secure a large number of children, for upon numerical strength depended the power, the reputation, the security, the very existence of the family and the tribe. Polygamy met the needs of the time by not merely enhancing the family prestige, but by satisfying the craving for children. Through it alone could be woven valuable family alliances of one tribe with another.[1] And how highly such connections were prized, is evident from the care with which the most distant marriage-relationships were looked upon and cherished.[2] Milk-kinship was reckoned as good as kinship by blood.[3] They sought, moreover, the aid of the institution of adoption, and even recognised a kindredship between the master and his manumitted slaves, which the Muslim Law sanctioned, for according to that Law, patron and client—in the event of failure of ascendants and descendants—could mutually inherit from each other. These facts convincingly prove the pressing need—then felt—for enlarging the circle of kinship, to strengthen and enforce the family and the tribe for attack, offensive and defensive. The polygamy of those days is in no way to be compared or confused with the later oriental *Harem system.* The Arabs were a race of decided aristocratic bent. On nobility of descent they laid an augmented emphasis, and cases of *mésalliance* were very rare with them.[4] In the house or tent of the tribal chief several women—with equal rights—never ruled or held sway. One, and one only, was the mistress of the house; namely, the noblest, the full-blooded one. The other co-wives held a position midway between the first and the

[1] It will not be out of place to refer here to a passage in the "*Occasional Addresses*" of Mr. Asquith (p. 17): "Whether you are judging a book, a picture, a character, or a movement, no one now dreams of denying that it is the first duty of the critic to put himself, so far as may be, imaginatively at the point of view of his subject, to take into account the antecedents which led up to, and the atmosphere which surrounded, its production, and not to be a party to that worst form of *ex post facto* legislation which imports modern standards of thought and taste into our judgments of the past."

[2] Von Kremer, Gesch. der herrsch. Ideen, p. 349.

[3] Khuda Bukhsh, *Politics in Islam*, p. 172; also pp. 266 et seq.

[4] Kamil of Mobbarrad, p. 27.

rest of the domestic servants. Of this the relation of Sarah to Hajar offers the best proof.

When Islam made its appearance, the old order was unchanged. In fact, it received fresh sanction and support from the Qur'an, which emphatically recommended begetting of numerous progeny. *Then* the existing position of affairs was such that polygamy could not be regarded as anything but necessary and wholly justifiable—more so even than in antiquity. The Arabs conquered large countries, and settled down over immense tracts of land where conquered races constituted an overwhelming majority. These they had to rule and keep in check by a huge network of military colonies. But these colonies were insignificant compared with the subject races whom they were called upon to govern and hold in check. The only way they could avert the inevitable doom, namely, of dying out speedily amidst a foreign people, was to rapidly enlarge the Arab population. For this purpose they pressed polygamy into their service, and on a very extensive scale. True enough, many *mésalliances* took place—unions of full-blooded Arabs with women of foreign nationalities—which eventually destroyed the purity of the race—and also other evils ensued which later shewed themselves in glaring light —but in the extraordinary condition of things then existing no one can justly find fault with the polygamy of those days, which was the only means available of multiplying and strengthening the ruling race. In the great families of the Mekkan Aristocracy they adhered to the old principle of national exclusiveness, and laid great stress upon the purity and nobility of the race. They lived for a long while in the old traditional way, and looked upon numerous offspring as the surest guarantee of power and influence. There was no fear then of the struggle for existence, nor was there any reason to economise, for the entire Arab population lived at the expense of the conquered countries, and the ruling families acquired fabulous wealth by conquests, by shares of booty, by means of lucrative posts. No consideration checked or hampered the multiplication of the Arab race, which grew with remarkable Arab fecundity. The subject population, on the other hand, declined in number, due partly to starvation and partly to conversion to Islam, which at once raised them to the ranks of the ruling race. Thus the

families of Arab magnates became exceedingly large. A son of the Omayyad Caliph Walid I had no less than sixty sons; and with the daughters, the inmates of the *Harem*, male and female attendants, relations and clients, the entire household may have counted more than 1,000 persons.[1] The household of an Abbasid family [2] even reckoned 4,000 heads. The ruling families multiplied with an enormous rapidity. When an insurrection broke out under Yazid I, in Medina, members of the Omayyad family with their clients, were expelled from the town. Their number, according to one version, was over 1,000, and according to another, over 3,000. Somewhat later, at the battle of Wadi Sabu, which was fought against the rebellious Berbers, no less than 10,000 Omayyads were said to have taken part in it.[3] Without attaching very much importance to the exactness of these figures, so much is certain, that immense was the increase in the ruling families—due either to high birth-rate or to the introduction of a large number of clients among them. When the Abbasids rose to power, their number grew with such astonishing rapidity that, at the time of Mamun, the members of the ruling family counted no less than 33,000 heads.[4] These facts suffice to convey to us some idea of the then existing social conditions, and the enormous effect of polygamy thereon. But hitherto we have looked only at the bright side of the picture—to its dark side too we must turn our attention.

In precisely the same ratio as, in the beginning, polygamy had contributed to the increase and strength of the ruling family, so later it led to their decline and fall. In the first period of Muslim Conquest every warrior, every civilian could easily maintain a family, however large. He drew from the State either military pay—high enough—or an annuity.[5] Another very lucrative source of income for the soldier was his share in the war-booty. Nor must we forget that as early as the time of the Omayyads, to every Muslim, who cared for it, land was given in *fief*.[6] There was thus for the Muslim population no necessity to

[1] De Goeje: Frag. Hist. Arab, I, 13.
[2] Mujam: IV, 18.
[3] Ibn Athir, I, 42.
[4] Masudi, VII, 59; De Goeje, Frag. I, 351; II, 430; Ibn Athir, VI, 225; Ibn Taghribardi, I, 575.
[5] Von Kremer, Vol. I, 213.
[6] *Cf.* Wellhausen, *Arabische Reich und Sein Sturz*, Section 4.

earn a living, or to struggle for existence. Still more favourable was the position of those who were attached to the ruling family, either as clients or relatives. They received a liberal share of State aid, and lived more or less at the cost of the Government.

In such extraordinarily favourable circumstances an unusual increase in population might well take place. But it is obvious that such exceptional conditions could not endure for ever. As soon as a change took place, polygamy showed its cloven hoof. Society developed the germs of decay and dissolution. This change, moreover, was not long in coming. In proportion as the Arab population multiplied and spread abroad, and the more they secured ownership of landed-property, the more powerful and fierce became the reaction against them. The decline in general prosperity—the fruit of inner disputes, political and religious—became more and more perceptible. Wars of conquest gradually ceased, and with that cessation also ceased the flow of gold among the people. State revenue steadily declined, or was chiefly spent in maintaining a standing army. Life grew harder and crueller, and trade and industry more and more slack and unremunerative. Under these changed conditions polygamy—by rapidly multiplying the family—became a serious handicap. Rich families were impoverished. Wealth deplorably declined. With the rise of the Abbasids, moreover, Arabs born in Persia —as also arabicised Persians—obtained the upper hand, and displaced the genuine Arabs from State-offices. The genuine Arabs, by reason of polygamy, had been impoverished much more quickly than they would otherwise have been. And, to add to their misfortune and poverty, landed property was gradually taken away from the descendants of Arab conquerors and transferred to the Persian and Turkish generals and ministers who ruled the court and enriched their friends and clients at the expense of the Arabs. But if these were the effects of polygamy on political and economic conditions—no less catastrophic were its effects on the social and moral life of the people. We early called attention to the fact that gradually a great change was effected in the view regarding purity of descent. While in Arab antiquity a high value was placed on nobility of descent on the woman's side; later this was completely ruled out of consideration, with the result that no check or restraint was left upon indiscriminate

polygamy. A degenerate and effeminate race of bastards thus came into being, with neither courage nor ability to maintain the high traditions of their fathers. Polygamy, in short, degenerated into the rule of mistresses and courtesans. It destroyed well-regulated family life, and let in a flood of evil effects. There originated the fatal germ of decay and death which stole into all Mohamedan States. In the Oriental courts of the middle ages—in Baghdad, in Cordova, as also elsewhere—polygamy steadily sapped the moral strength of the people. Imagine an old Oriental *harem* with its countless inmates—wives and sons and daughters and the rest of them—and its poisonous atmosphere of hatred, distrust and suspicion. What impression would the ambitious and intriguing wives make upon youthful, pliant minds? Indeed, the more numerous the family, the less was the love of the father for his offspring. They grew up in a hateful *milieu* of ever-warring, wrangling wives. Each saw in his brother an unworthy, evil-minded rival. If one ascended the vacant throne—the rest banded themselves together against him—seething with one thought; namely, his fall, and stirred by one ambition; namely, to seize the throne for himself. In the earlier days when only the child of a noble-born lady was looked upon as a legitimate successor, a wholesome restraint existed which obviated fratricidal warfare. But soon this principle was a thing of the past, and *all*—regardless of birth—pressed forward an equally valid claim. To polygamy are clearly traceable the numerous fratricides, insurrections, and disputes over succession which disfigure and dishonour Oriental history. A fixed rule of succession might perhaps have saved the situation; but that was impossible of realization in the existing order of things.

It is undoubted that these pernicious effects of polygamy were far more perceptible in the higher, than in the middle or the lower ranks of society. Here no sooner had the exceptional conditions of the early times ended (namely, State aid and immunity from earning one's livelihood) than the monogamous tendency re-asserted itself,[1] and a family life, such

[1] An old writer speaks thus: The genuine Arab, *i.e.*, the inhabitant of the desert, always had but one sweetheart to whom he clung unto death and precisely the same was the case with her. But this has changed and it is now deemed pleasant to enjoy frequent changes with the result that *he* is reckoned most gallant and distinguished who loves a large number of girls.—*Kitabul Mowashsha*, Fol. 77.

as we are familiar with, came into being. Descriptions are not wanting of happy family circles where the master and his wife lived on the best of terms, watching their children grow up. Numerous too were affectionate and peaceful households, where the father, surrounded by his children, sons and daughters, sat at meals. Nor were cases unknown of the wife ruling her husband and holding undisputed sway at home.[1] Instances of genuine, ardent love for children, too, are by no means rare or unknown. Thus, says a man who has been summoned to battle by a Kharijite chief, but who has declined to join, "My daughters, who are helpless, have enhanced my love for life, and I fear that—were I to die—they would suffer misery, and perchance be constrained to drink muddy water after having tasted water clear and pure as crystal."[2] Not rare either were cases of that true love which unites two persons for life, and which relegates the sexual element to a secondary position. In the struggle with adverse circumstances, real high-bred qualities never wholly die. The Arab wife shows a strong, passionate sensibility, and possesses a depth of feeling and emotion which arms her for the highest renunciation and the noblest self-sacrifice. Thus the wife of a man—condemned to death—disfigures her comely countenance, to bring home the tranquilising conviction to her husband that she would not marry again.[3] The wife of Othman pulled out her upper teeth, when after her husband's death Muawiyah sought her hand, to show that she never would marry again.[4] This explains a phenomenon which manifests itself early enough in Islam, and which is characteristic of female mentality: overflowing enthusiasm and keen religious sensibility. Just as nuns and sisters of the cloister, in the Middle Ages, who, for the loss of their earthly joy, consoled themselves, in their gloomy cell, with visions of a heavenly bridegroom, and cheerfully acquiesced in mental hallucinations; so, in Islam, pious female enthusiasts, overwhelmed by a mystic love of God, renounced the world and gave themselves up to fervent prayers and pious devotion. Others again took to learned studies, and even won the

[1] Ibn Khallikan, *Sub* Othman Said Hiry and Zain-ul-Abidin.
[2] *Kamil*, p. 259. In one of the *Moallaqa* the poet speaks of 'pure water' as the drink of his beloved.
[3] *Kamil*, 767.
[4] *Kitabul Mowashsha*, Fol. 84.

honourable title of *Shaikha* (Professor). Thus a certain Shuhda enjoyed great renown. She had attended the lectures of the most famous Professors, and had obtained a licence from them to deliver lectures on her own account—lectures which drew large audiences.[1]

I have in my collection a very old MS. of a work which bears the title of *Masari-ul-ushshaq* (misfortunes of lovers). On its title-page it is stated that this book, as it stands, has been taken down from the lectures of the famous lady, Professor Shuhda, to whom the honorary title of *Fakhrunnissa* (pride of women) is affixed. She had heard the contents of this book from the author, which she had perpetuated in her lectures delivered in her house on the grounds of the mosque of the Castle at Baghdad. She died in 574 A.H. (1178-9 A.D.). It is evident from the superscription on this MS. that she was actually lecturing a year before her death.

Other learned ladies are mentioned too: Zainab, the daughter of Shari[2] in Nishapur; the daughter of Shaikh Taqiuddin Wasiti, who received the title of *Sett-ul-Fuqaha, i.e.*, the mistress of jurists (d. 725 A.H., 1325 A.D.). She delivered lectures at Damascus. It was there that she lectured on a juristic work (*Kitab-ul-Khiraj* of *Abu Yusuf*). She used the original MS. which is to be found in the collection of M. Schefer in Paris.

Only the Arabs produced such learned ladies. Of this type the Persians and the Turks have none to show. The utmost they can say is that their women experimented in politics. Be it noted that the Arab women even exercised judicial functions.[3]

It is surprising that whereas in the earliest times the number of women, distinguished for poetical talents, is very considerable; a perceptible decline in this direction is obvious about the second and third century of the Hegira. True, even in later times fine, cultured women are met with—especially slave-girls, studiously trained, who improvised verses; yet it will not be incorrect to state that the poetical and literary output of women is clearly and sensibly on the wane. Only in Spain, where Arab culture attained its highest

[1] Ibn Khallikan, Vol. I, p. 625. Ibn Athir, XI, 300.
[2] Ibn Khallikan, I, 551; d. 615 (1218–9 A.D.).
[3] Von Kremer, *Culturgeschichte*, I, 420.

splendour, did ladies show a special taste and aptitude for poetry and literature.[1] A great number of poetesses are mentioned whose poems, elegant and lively, point to the epicurean spirit which dominated the court of Cordova, as also those of the later and smaller feudal lords. These poems have for their themes love or panegyric. Wallada (d. 480 A.H.)—the beautiful and noble-born—has first place in the charming circle of cultivated women. Renowned was she alike for her royal descent and her poetical talents. Her house at Cordova, where her father for a time held the throne, was a centre of wits, savants and poets. The most prominent men of the town vied with each other for her favour, which was bestowed with all the caprices of one fair and false. She made no secret of her bold and romantic adventures, and many passages in her poems show that in the court circle and in the highest society the very opposite of prudery prevailed. In the freedom and *abandon* of her language Wallada was outdone only by her intimate friend Muhga, one of the loveliest of the women of Cordova. For this reason many passages in her poems cannot be translated. It is noteworthy of her and of her time that she never married, but she managed to compensate herself for it. She sent the following poem to one of her lovers as an invitation to meet her:

> Expect me when the night spreads her darkness;
> For I know she guardeth my secret in silence.
> Ah! were the sun to feel my burning, consuming love
> It would not shine nor would the moon rise,
> Nor would the stars twinkle in heaven.

Against this self-willed, highly-endowed woman the East can put forward none save Olayya. She was the Caliph Mahdi's daughter by a slave-girl—thus a half-sister of Harun-ul-Rashid. She won a two-fold distinction, namely, in poetry and in music.[2] She set her songs to music and sang them. For long her compositions retained a great vogue. By her art, her talent, her winsome ways, she enlivened the tedium of the Caliph's palace and exerted, for some time, very considerable influence there. Her one fault was a mole on her forehead, but she managed to get over this trouble. She took to a fillet set

[1] On this subject I shall refer the reader to the Second Chapter of *Schack's* admirable *Poesie und kunst der Araber*.

[2] Undoubtedly she inherited her musical talents from her mother.

with jewels, and it suited her so well that it became popular, and the entire world of fashion adopted the *fillet â la Olayya* as the ornament of the day. Knowing, as we do, the life of the ladies of the higher circles, we need not marvel at the reports of her romantic adventures. One of the Caliph's slaves was the object of Olayya's passionate worship. So violent and uncontrollable was this passion that to visit him she did not hesitate to take a dangerous route which led through a rain-pipe. She alludes to it in one of her poems :—

Enough, enough is the agony that I have endured for thee—
O *Tall.*
To visit thee I even took the road that lay perilously between
life and death.

Soon her brother—the reigning Caliph Harun—got wind of the affair, and forbade her even to mention the name of *Tall.* But not long did this order remain in force : for none—not even the Caliph—could resist the charm of this fair and enticing enchantress. She married : but marriage to her was no bar to the enjoyment of life. She made no secret of anything.

The case of Olayya leads us to speak of a peculiar feature of *harem* life, namely, the relation subsisting [1] between the male and female servants in a large household. We have already mentioned, while describing court-life at Baghdad, that the households of great and influential men—the princely houses more so still—counted in those days hundreds, nay, thousands of male and female members, between whom, supervision notwithstanding, manifold must have been the points of contact. But it must not be forgotten that in the East supervision then was actually not so rigorous as it is now ; for, during the highest bloom of Arab civilization much greater liberty of action was conceded than during its decline, when the *harem* system degenerated into a downright, inexorable seclusion of women. If Olayya, a prince's daughter, could carry on a love intrigue with a slave—how much easier must have been such intimacies between the young male and female slaves in a princely household ! [2] That such intimacies

[1] 11,000 eunuchs are said to have been in the household of Muqtadir, in addition to Grecian and Frankish slave-girls. Ibn [illegible] I 248

[2] See Heitland's Agricola, p. 268, where it is stated [illegible] Empire sexual passion was generally the cause of slaves getting into mischief. They were allowed to have intercourse with the female slaves at a fixed tariff.

existed is undoubted. Different writers report individual instances.

Jahidh, the well-known philosopher, relates such an one. "I was travelling" says he, "with Mohamed Ibn Ibrahim on his yacht from Samarra to Baghdad. Scarcely had we started when Ibrahim ordered curtains to be put up on the deck, and directed the slave-girls that were there to sing to the accompaniment of music. Then one of them began to sing the following verse to the accompaniment of the Zither :—

> Ah ! for pity I pray for the lovers whom friends and helpers lack.
> How long must they be kept apart and do without each other,
> And endure in silence their racking pain ?

When she had concluded her song another slave-girl jestingly asked her: What, then, are the lovers to do in such a case ? Into the river she threw herself. A young slave stood, fanning the flies away from the master. When he saw the slave-girl disappear in the river, he too stepped forward, flung himself into the river and there joined his beloved, never to be parted again." [1]

We come across other stories of this sort too. But what made love-affairs so tragic in the *harem* was the fact that, though opportunities were only too plentiful for slaves to love and to be loved, yet there never was a hope nor a prospect of peaceful union or a happy termination. As a rule discovery drew upon the guilty couple the unmeasured wrath of the master, and meant, generally, death for one or the other party—perhaps of both. Rare was an ending so exceptional as in the following case. The Caliph Mahdi, being informed that a young man had managed to get into the room of a slave-girl, straightway sent to her room where a youth of attractive appearance was found. Forthwith he was taken to the Caliph, and the following facts came to light. The slave-girl belonged to his mother, and an attachment grew up between them. She was sold to the *harem* of the Caliph, and the youth

[1] Masudi, VII, 224. It is very characteristic of the spirit of the time that the oldest writer who narrates this story adds "how angry was the master at this incident." A hundred years later the same story is related by another with the addition that when the sailors wanted to rescue the girl the master called out to them, "let her be drowned, may God curse her." Masari, Fol. 31. We see how cruelty and heartlessness accompanied the decline of culture.

staked his very life to see her, for without her he could not live, and he thus sought peace in death. The Caliph ordered twenty stripes. He bore the punishment with complete self-possession, and only said when it was over—"Never so long as I live shall I renounce my love for her." This lashed Mahdi into fury and he sent for the executioner. Even this left the youth undeterred. He seated himself on the leather carpet on which executions took place and cheerfully awaited the fatal stroke. Only he begged permission of the Caliph to speak to her. When this permission was given he recited a verse which emphasized his undeviating love for her—torture and death notwithstanding. Mahdi kept silence for a time. Then tears flowed from his eyes, and he ordered the lovers to leave the palace and go their way.[1] Such indulgence was exceptional, for jealousy, when once aroused, transformed the Arab into a blood-thirsty monster, and the life of a slave was to him of not the slightest moment or consideration. Although the jurists in their learned theories propounded that the life of a Muslim slave, was as valuable as that of a freeman, this view never really obtained wide acceptance—certainly never within the walls of the *harem* which, shut off from the outward world, impenetrable even to the police, was ruled by a despotic master or mistress, who, untroubled and unrestrained, dealt summarily with the question of life and death.

It is related of a poet who, by reason of his eccentricity, received the surname of Dik-ul-Jinn (d. 235 or 236 A.H., 850–51 A.D.), that, in a fit of jealousy, he killed his slave-girl, whom he suspected of criminal intrigue with one of his attendants. After the bloody deed was done he discovered her innocence. He repented of his deed, and it is characteristic of the man and his age that henceforward he immortalized his repentance in numerous poems which found a wide publicity.[2] In the secrecy of the *harem* many such tragedies were undoubtedly perpetrated.

To the degrading influence of the *harem* system must be ascribed a vice, which more than any other, has contributed to the deep decay of morals and the inevitable loosening and dissolution of the family tie in the Orient. It was unnatural

[1] Masari, Fol. 28.

[2] Ibn Khallikan under 'Dik-un-Jinn.' Slaves, in point of fact, could be killed by their owners although this view was strongly opposed by the jurists.

love—for this poisonous plant grew and throve on the soil of the *harem*. In the houses of the rich and powerful hundreds of young people were forced to live together. Relations between the sexes were as free and gay and easy for the rich as well-nigh impossible for those that were not free and independent. Moreover, offences against chastity were brutally punished, though indifferent was the moral tone, and lax and shameless was the talk regarding matters sexual in high circles. Thus, to escape punishment, unnatural love grew up between slaves of the same sex. While fear of punishment accounts for the introduction and growth of this vice among the slaves—a very different reason explains its progress and diffusion among the rich. The wealthy debauchee, enfeebled and sated with the enjoyments of the *harem*, looked for new diversions and gaieties, and found them in these revolting practices.

This new vice—to which the Arab originally was a stranger—spread like a cancer. It poisoned the higher no less than the lower circles of society. The great thinker Ibn Khaldun acknowledges this fact and correctly estimates its destructive, disruptive effects.[1]

In the beginning this vice was almost unknown to the Arabs, and there is no indication or evidence of its wide-spread existence.[2] After closer contact with Persians and, notably after the ascendancy of the House of Abbas, when Persian fashion and Persian immorality spread more and more into the higher circles of Arab society—this vice, too, came more and more into vogue. Even in antiquity the Persians and the Medes enjoyed, in this direction, a shameful notoriety. Under Mamun the following poetical leaflet was put into circulation: "Our prince suffers himself to be corrupted; our judge indulges in sodomy—O shameless government! The adulterer the Kadhi punishes, but he lets the sodomite go without censure or reproof. Such evil will not cease, we think, so long as a prince of the house of Abbas holds sway."[3] The impudent poet was banished to the Indian frontier, but he was not far wrong in his indictment. Yahya

[1] Ibn Khaldun, Prolég, II, 305.

[2] The author of the *Kitabul-mowashsha* says (Fol. 102): "I know of no ancient Arab poet who, in his poetry, ever thought of singing the praises of other than women."

[3] Masudi, VII, 46.

Ibn Akthum (one of Mamun's greatest favourites) who, for sometime, held the post of a judge at Basra, was only too well-known for his indulgence in unnatural pleasures. It is he, indeed, who is referred to in this poem. He so openly gloried in his shame that the people sent in a petition of complaint against him to the court. The complaint was left unheeded, and he rose higher and higher in the Caliph's favour. When later the Caliph commissioned him to organize a band of messengers to carry the royal despatches he selected four hundred youths for that purpose, and with these he carried on his criminal intrigue.[1] It must be added, however, that Yahya was an Arab born in Khorasan, one of the many Perso-Arabs who with Mamun acquired control of the State, and introduced the Persian vices into court and tyrannised over the pure-born Arabs.

In the earliest days of Islam severe indeed was the view taken of this offence. Malik Ibn Anas[2] taught that lapidation unto death was the proper punishment for sodomy, and Shafai agreed with him. Abu Hanifa, however, taking a reprehensibly lenient view of this widely-diffused evil, considered a mere corporal punishment sufficient for it.[3]

So much is certain that, at the court of Baghdad at the time of the Caliph Harun-ul-Rashid, the scourge was notorious. The practice was indulged in unabashed; in fact, it was not treated as a vice at all. The court poet Abu Nawas—whose poems have come down to us—openly boasts of his unnatural amours, and freely sings of the objects of his criminal passion. From this vice Harun seems to have been free, but his sons made ample amends for it.[4] One of these had a very handsome page called Yasr. Another of the Caliph's sons, a half-brother of the possessor of the page, began to pay attention to him with the result that the owner of Yasr became so jealous that he had his favourite shut up like a woman in the *harem*, and would not let him out except under a proper escort.[5] Such youths were conspicuous by their outward appearance. They affected female manners and wore yellow and variegated dresses.

One fact, henceforward, stands out in bold prominence; namely, that in precisely the same proportion as the female

[1] Masudi.
[2] Vincent, Le Loi Musulman.
[3] Ibn Khaldun, Vol. II, p. 305 note.
[4] Aghani, VI, 192
[5] Aghani, VI, 208.

sex was lowered from its lofty position, immorality increased, and the family and society sank deeper and deeper into decay and demoralization.

The education then imparted was not powerful enough to stem the tide of degeneration, for it was but partial and one-sided.[1] Much, indeed, has Islam done for education. It went far beyond what was done by the civilization of classical Antiquity, as also by early Christianity, in the way of bringing a certain amount of useful knowledge to all classes of people. In the beginning the effort to place all—irrespective of rank and dignity—in a position to read the Holy Book was due to the highly democratic tendency of Islam. From this neither women nor slaves were excluded, for the door of salvation was not to be shut against any human being. Moreover, in the conquered countries peoples of other faiths sought the fold of Islam. It was essential, then, to make the Holy Book accessible to them. Thus it happened that even in the earliest times many elementary schools were established not only in Syria and Iraq but also in other provinces. Hajjaj, the great statesman, before he began his political career, was a schoolmaster in Taif, a small mountainous town in North Arabia. Abu Muslim, the great general, in his own way the Wallenstein of Arabian history, visited in after life his school in Khorasan, then the extreme north-eastern province of the empire. At the end of the second century of the A.H. there was not only a boys' school at Tustar in the province of Persia, but regular attendance was in large measure insisted upon. A certain mystic—celebrated hereafter—a student of this school—along with other boys, could only be removed by special arrangement with the teacher. We learn from this case that the boy in question went to school at the age of six. Wherever there was a school the poor had free admission to it. Boys and girls read together. Nor were little slaves absent from these educational institutions. But all this notwithstanding—the education of girls was far from satisfactory.[2] With the degradation of the female sex, more and more the view gained ground that education was an evil thing for women. Even

[1] On the question of Muslim education I would refer the reader to Snouck Hurgronje's *Mekka*, Vol. II, Chapter III, pp. 200–294, and Prof. D. B. Macdonald's Lecture IX in his *Aspects of Islam*.

[2] Aghani, XIV, 51.

Ma'rri in his philosophical poems says: Teach the girls to spin, to weave, to do embroidery work, but let them leave reading and writing alone.[1]

Poor was the elementary education given to the boys. It was generally confined to reading and writing. The most essential part of the curriculum was the study of the Qur'an, for it enabled them to fulfil their religious obligations. They were generally made to learn some important *suras* of the Qur'an by heart. The more talented committed the entire text to memory. The conclusion of Qur'anic studies was always celebrated with a feast, and this custom continues to this day in the Muslim East. With this study, which was really a training of memory, was united the art of writing—an accomplishment which, through elementary schools, became widely diffused in the early days of Islam. But all this study was purely formal, and could not be counted upon to oppose the forces that were making for the decline of morals.

Moreover, the teachers, in whose hands the education of youths was, never cared to train or enlarge the mind. They were quite content with the mechanical work of teaching to read, to write, to commit the Qur'an to memory. More, indeed, could not be expected of them, for they were badly paid, and were not much respected. Generally the teacher received no fixed salary but was paid by the family of his pupil in kind—a fixed ration of bread.[2]

On the question of education Omar I is reported to have said that boys, above all, should be taught swimming, archery, and reading; also poetry, but that mainly through oral instruction. For girls he recommended the spindle. But this saying—ascribed to Omar—is clearly apocryphal. It is absolutely unthinkable that Omar should have recommended swimming in a country where there is no sea; nay, not even a decent river. This report was obviously invented in Basra, Kufa or Baghdad, where the Arab *savants* established their workshop for the systematic corruption of old poems and the invention of anecdotes. We shall speak later of the influence which poetry, and especially old poetry, exerted on the character of the people.

And yet they had a pretty good idea of the education

[1] Lozumiyyat. [2] Kamil, 291.

of youths. The Caliph Abdul Malik is reported to have said to the teacher of his sons that he was to teach the Qur'an to them; to restrain them from mixing in the highest or the lowest circles of society; to keep them on meat diet, for it is strength-giving; to instruct them in ancient poetry, and to see that they acquire a pure faultless mode of speaking. When he punishes them—the Caliph enjoined—he is to punish them in private, so that none of the servants hear or know anything about it.[1]

We shall show in the sequel how this system of education affected the character of the people: but indeed it was not powerful enough to counteract for long the evil influences of the *harem* system which sapped the family life and wrecked the morals of the people.

[1] Ibn Hamdun, I, Fol. 216.

XIV

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS UNDER THE CALIPHATE

WHEN the Arabs marched into foreign countries they were still primitive. Unaffected by external influences, which could scarcely reach their home-land—difficult of access and practically detached from the world—they retained their distinctive racial characteristics. Undaunted courage, pride, keen sense of nationality, abounding vitality, a spirit of irrepressible adventure—all these they possessed, and in a striking manner. In other words, their qualities were those which we find in a people on the threshold of a promising historic career—but in a marked degree.

Yet, as an equipoise to these great national virtues (if so they may be styled) we must refer also to the vices which overshadow them. Since the dawn of history, love of plunder and greed for riches have been prominent Semitic traits, and the Arab was entirely ruled by them. Conspicuous was he, too, by his great excitability; his hatred and contempt for foreigners; his passion for vengeance; his uncontrollable love of independence under the guise of freedom from all restraint. For a while this was checked by the severe discipline of Islam; but, with the loosening of the religious hold, it reasserted itself, and bore fruit in wild anarchy and disorder.

In conquered countries the Arabs, in the beginning, avoided contact with the indigenes. The position of these was fixed by political considerations, and the double dividing-wall of language and religion kept them, at first, separate and distinct from the conquerors. However insurmountable this dividing-wall seemed at one time, it proved in the long run of little or no effect. Like every new religion; like every new idea born of the spirit of the time, Islam possessed an expanding, assimilating power. It extended its bounds farther and farther, until it ended by making the idea of "national exclusiveness" a myth, a fiction.

By accepting Islam, people of other nationalities acquired, at a stroke, complete equality of rights with the Arabs, and were raised to the rank of the governing classes. The heavier the yoke the more irresistible became the spell of the formula "there is no God but God, and Mohamed is his Prophet," which immediately set them free, from the bondage and perils of the day. Thus countless conversions took place in Iraq and Syria, in Egypt and Persia, and in other conquered countries. But, with the growth and consolidation of the Muslim Empire, the position of the subject-races became more and more unfavourable.[1] The capitulations, originally concluded with them, fell into oblivion. The religious spirit of Islam became more and more uncompromising, and the State required a larger and larger purse. The need for money increased with the lapse of time, and, to obtain it, the burden of taxation grew heavier and heavier on the subject-races. Thus insupportable became the lot of the non-muslims. The result naturally was that the greater the disabilities and oppression, the greater became the willingness of non-muslims to embrace Islam. Certainly, conversion was largely due to the wondrous successes of Islam; but, as undoubtedly, there were many cases of genuine conviction.

Thus, in conquered countries—Arabia was not affected by it—a new class of people came into being. The ruling-class consisted of genuine Arabs—conquerors of the country. By the side of these stood the class of Neo-Muslims who, by force or persuasion, had accepted Islam, and were admitted, "in theory," to the full rights of Islamic citizenship. Behind them were ranged the subject-races who, by timely capitulation, had secured toleration for themselves and their religion, and were, on that account, called the 'Protected class.'

(I) Arab conquerors; (II) Neo-Muslims (III) Professors of tolerated cults—these composed the population of the Muslim Empire. It will be our task now to review their inter-connexions; their gradual transformation; their final fusion and merging into one whole. In the beginning the first class, consisting of the conquerors and their following, remained in their organization and constitution precisely

[1] Prof. Margoliouth, *Development of Mohamedanism*, Lecture IV, and Arnold, *Preaching of Islam*, Chapter III.

the same as they had been before the Prophet. The nation consisted of individual tribes which had been welded together into one national unit by the common religion—ISLAM. In every one of these numerous tribes there were prominent families which spoke the decisive word in the affairs of the tribe. Round these leading families gathered the great mass of the tribesmen. With Islam a new class of aristocracy sprang into prominence. The chief friends and supporters of the Prophet who collected round him in Medina constituted a kind of religious aristocracy which soon came into collision with the old families of Mekka who had continued loyal to the Pre-Islamite ideals. By personal influence and far-seeing diplomacy the first two Caliphs succeeded in averting a conflict between them, but Caliph Othman, by glaring and obtrusive partisanship, deeply offended the religious party of Medina. The consequences of this misguided policy were his murder and the great civil war. But when the Omayyads finally won, and took charge of the Government, the Mekkans came with them into supreme power. Henceforward the fate of the Empire was in the hands of the chief families of the influential tribes. Their support of the Government depended largely upon the capacity of the Caliph to satisfy their lust for gold. Under the Omayyads the army itself was organized upon the tribal basis, and rested entirely upon the old tribal organization. Influential families of the ruling tribe appropriated the most important and profitable posts and offices of the State. Not merely personal qualifications, but far more his descent, the position and influence of his tribe, were matters of moment in choosing a man for appointment. Rare, indeed, was the appointment of a man of indifferent descent to a high position. Pertinent and significant in this connection is the letter of the Caliph Hisham to Khalid Ibn Abdullah Kisri, his Governor in Iraq, in which he reminds him, among other things, of the fact that he appointed him Governor of an important province notwithstanding that he ranked below many Arab families in point of descent.[1] While the old Arab tradition laid great stress on nobility of descent, Islam did exactly the opposite. It not only declared all the faithful to be brothers, but emphatically condemned the obstinate adhesion to

[1] Kamil, p. 791.

clannish spirit and tribal jealousy. Thus runs an old poem. "Smuggled into a tribe by adoption, he supports his adoptive father in the hope that he may admit him into the circle of his noble tribesmen, but my 'father is Islam, and no other do I need, though he be of the noble descent of Kais and Tamim.'"

The following incident strikingly illustrates the contrast between the old popular idea and the ideal set up by Islam. A Beduin of the tribe of Anbar came to the Governor for advice regarding a question of inheritance from his father. The Governor wished to know how many sons were living. "My brother and I," replied the Beduin, then after a pause, added, "and a bastard (Hajin, son of a slave-girl)." "Then," rejoined the Governor, "the inheritance must be divided into three equal parts." "What!" protested the Beduin. "Is the bastard to have an equal share with us?" [1]

The unceasing wars of conquest, which brought in rich booty, served in the beginning to soften or allay tribal jealousies, or at least to hush them into silence. By annexation of large territories to the Islamic Empire, the Arab tribes, in a comparatively short time, spread themselves over immense, thickly-populated countries. This weakened their power of resistance against the Government; for, surrounded, as they were, by foreign peoples—brought under the sceptre of Islam—they were thrown upon the support and protection of the Government. The oldest authorities report that next to the family of Hashim, to which the Prophet belonged, the most important Arab tribal families were five: Kais, Tamim, Shaiban, Yeman and Kinda.[2] Of these five the first three were of the North-Arabian or of the Ismaelite tribe, the last two of the South-Arabian or, after their alleged biblical ancestor, Joktan, were the Joktanides. In the conquest of Syria the South Arabian tribes had taken a leading part. The Arab population, there, was therefore predominantly South Arabian.[3] Even in the 3rd century

[1] Kamil, 256.

[2] Aghani, XVII, 105. According to Mobarrad, Kamil p. 5, the noblest family of Tamim was the family of Abdullah Ibn Darim; of Kais, the family of Fazarah; of Shaiban, the family of Bakr Ibn Wail. Ibn Hamdun says: of Modar, the noblest tribe was the tribe of Rabia, and the Yamanide, the Kodáa. Ibn Hamdun, I, Fol. 223.

[3] The tribes that took part in the conquest of Syria were: Azd, Himyar, Hamdan, Madhig, Khaulan, Khatam, Kinana, Kodáa,

of the A.H. South Arabian tribes dwelt round Hims and Hamah. These were Tayy, Kinda, Himyar, Kalb, Hamdan. They even intermarried with the North-Arabian tribes of the great Kais family.[1] There were, however, incessant feuds between the two great factions; namely, the North and the South Arabian tribes.[2] The Omayyads relied pre-eminently on the Southern group.

In Iraq the reverse was the case. Most of the North-Arabian tribes emigrated, and settled down there. This was partly before and partly after the conquest of this country. The North-Arabian tribes, therefore, preponderated there. But the South-Arabian tribes were not altogether absent either. In fact, in the first campaigns the South Arabian Bajila-tribe had joined in such numbers that they formed a considerable portion of the army. Other South Arabian tribes, together with the North Arabian tribes, constituted early the Muslim garrison in Kufa and Basra.[3] Some of these split up still further, and settled down in Karag and Isphahan (Yaqubi, p. 53); while others migrated to Egypt and Syria (Ibn Taghribardi, I, 295). Some of the South Arabian tribes even went as far as Sijistan, where, under the Caliph Abdul Malik, one of them was appointed by Hajjaj, Governor of the Province. He provided his tribesmen so lavishly with state-annuities and Government posts that he deeply stirred the resentment of the section of the tribe of Bakr Ibn Wail, which, like the Kais tribe, had made their home there.

It was customary for the governor to be chosen from the powerful tribes, loyal to the Government. The governor-designate usually took along with him a number of his tribesmen who always were with him. These were favoured and fêted and pampered, and upon them, in all circumstances, the Governor counted for support.

The North-Arabian tribes were known under the names

Lakham, Judam, Kinda, Hadramaut. *Ibn Asakir*, Fol. 75. *Abu Ismail Azdi*, p. 195. Of these only the Kinana were the North-Arabian.

[1] Yaqubi, 111, 112, 113.

[2] Tamim, Rabiya. The latter had settled in Mesopotamia before Islam.

[3] For instance, Azd, Hamdan, Kinda of the South-Arabian and Tamim Kais, Bakr (Ibn Wail), Rabiya of the North-Arabian tribe. Ibn Athir, IV, 111, 118, 163; V, 53; De Goeje: Frag. Hist. Arab. I, 54. Portions of the tribes of Abdul Kais, Takif, Tamim, Dabba, Khoza'a and Hanifa passed on from Kufa and Basra to Persia and settled down in Isphahan (Yaqubi, 50, 51).

of Modar,[1] Nizar or Kais; while the South-Arabian were called the Yamanides. The North-Arabian tribes were also called Adnan and the South-Arabian Kahtan which equated with Joktan.[2] These two parties were at strife in almost all the provinces. They were jealous of each other, with an intense jealousy. Only a common purpose hushed, for a while, this intense mutual enmity.

True, in antiquity the South-Arabians belonged to an independent Semitic family, with a language or rather a dialect different from that of the North-Arabian, but, whatever the difference, it had almost disappeared by the time Islam was announced to the Arabs. The majority of the South-Arabians had, by then, ceased to speak in their own dialect. The only thing, then, that separated them from the North-Arabians was the old inherited tribal rivalry and the feeling of a different geographical origin. In the first wars of conquest these two parties had reaped a rich harvest, but as soon as they settled down in conquered countries their old petty jealousies broke out again. In political conflicts, in civil wars, this old tribal jealousy was a powerful weapon for one side or the other.[3]

[1] See Zaydan's *Umayyads and Abbasids* p. 65.

[2] Thus Jahiz says: Kumait, the poet, was an Adnanite and yet he belonged to the Shi'ite sect and took sides with the inhabitants of Kufa but Tirimmah was a Kahtanide and professed the Kharijite faith and belonged to the Syrian party. Isphahani, Muzherat, II, 7. Ma'add is the collective name by which the poets describe all the North-Arabian tribes.

[3] Cf. Ibn Athir, V, 255, 462. Masudi, VI, 45. Most of the South Arabian tribes in Syria stood by the Omayyads, Aghani, XVIII, 69, 70. The North-Arabians, on the other hand, constituted the opposition to the Government (Ibn Athir, IV, 215). Similar conditions obtained in Iraq (Ibn Athir, IV, 254, 255). Individual Mudarites, indeed, sometimes join the Government. Thus, in the beginning of the Omayyad rule, under Yazid I besides the South-Arabians the North-Arabians too sided with the Government (Hawazin and Tamim. Ibn Athir, IV, 79, 124). On the other hand many times the Yamanides rose against the Omayyads (Ibn Athir, V, 59). Muawiyah used the North-Arabians chiefly for fights on land and the South-Arabians for naval warfare (Aghani, XVIII, 69, 70). Similar conditions, as in Syria and Iraq, existed in the next most important province of Khorasan. The tribes which had settled down there, at the conquest, were mostly North-Arabian: Tamim, Rabiya, Bakr Ibn Wail (Ibn Athir, IV, 128, 129, 130, 171) but the South Arabians were there too (Ibn Athir, V, 9, 95). The position there, however, was different from that in Syria. The South-Arabian there formed the opposition (De Goeje: Frag. Hist. Arab. I, 184; while the North-Ara[illegible] (Ibn Athir, 262, 265). Even in Khorasan [illegible] constant

We should not imagine that the entire tribe left their home to settle down in foreign countries. The migration was never wholesale. Generally a remnant stayed behind in Arabia. The surplus population, capable of bearing arms and eager for booty, usually went forth to foreign lands. Such a tribe may be likened to a bee-hive which, sending out its young ones, remained in its ancestral home. Thus we meet the tribe of Tamim in Iraq and Khorasan, but it exists in Arabia to this day. From the Northern frontier of Arid to the Dahna desert the entire population consists of the Tamim tribe (Palgrave). Thus does Farazdaq speak in praise of Tamim: "Although the Quraishites are ill at ease, the fact remains that Tamim still rule the earth—near and far. Countless as the stars overhead are they, and indeed no other tribe, save Tamim, count such brilliant stars." (Aghani, XIX, 10, 11.) In the days of the Omayyads there must have been a strong settlement of the Tamim in the Lower Euphrates, for according to Ibn Hamdun, I, 86, this tribe, along with the inhabitants of the desert and the strangers admitted to the tribe (Zott, Sajabigah and Aswirah), reckoned 70,000 men. Precisely the same was the case with other important tribes. But a difference was soon perceived and noted between the original and the migrated branch of the tribe. The two developed on wholly different lines. The portion remaining at home lived in the fashion of the good old days of Arab antiquity, and, in process of time, repaired and made up the loss sustained by emigration. The isolation of Arabia favoured their development—uninterrupted, uninterfered with—for Arabia lay sheltered from the political storms which shook the other parts of the Muslim Empire. As for those who took up their residence in foreign countries, they were insensibly drawn into the vortex of party-politics; came into close touch with foreigners; either perished in the stress of circumstances or suffered a gradual but sure and complete transformation. But first we must clearly understand the tribal system. This is essential, for, without such a clear and correct view, the

disputes and fights (Ibn Athir, IV, 210; V, 95). The matter is easy to explain: the minority was discontented and formed the opposition to Government; while the majority, in possession of power, was loyal to Government. The South-Arabian tribe of Hamdan, which mainly settled down in Iraq, always sided with the Alides (Ibn Athir, V, 447).

course of Arab civilization can scarcely be understood. The name given to the tribe indicates that its members were regarded as the descendants of one common ancestor; for what we call the tribe is expressed in Arabic by the word "Banu", which means sons, children, descendants. "Banu Tamim", "Banu Kais", or "Banu Shaiban" are, therefore, the children of Tamim, Kais or Shaiban. The origin of the tribal system goes back to remotest antiquity. It arose out of the family growing in descendants and dependents. This enlarged family was knit together by the recollection of common descent, and was ruled by a common tribal chief. At a time when there was no constituted authority to protect and to govern, such a union was an indispensable necessity, and such a union the needs of the hour called forth and maintained. "One for all and all for one" was its cherished maxim. The Law of retaliation and blood-revenge grew out of it and was regulated by it. Each individual tribe stood out as a whole against another. In the event of murder or any other injury to any of its members, the entire tribe felt injured and aggrieved, and it was its duty, as a whole, to call upon the tribe to which the offender belonged to compensate and expiate the offence. The entire people were parcelled out into tribes, and to one such group one must needs belong for the protection of body and property. To be tribeless was to be an outlaw—outside the pale of protection and safety. If a tribe became too weak to maintain a separate existence, the members hastened to join a more powerful one in which they were gradually absorbed. Thus, in the course of centuries, innumerable tribes were merged in larger ones, while the larger ones, becoming too unwieldy, dissolved, in their turn, into countless sections and subsections. But they all lovingly retained the memory of common ancestry, and ever and anon showed an unfailing eagerness to reunite for a common purpose or to face a common danger. Already, in the days of the Prophet, individual tribes had become too immense and unwieldy. This fact is best evidenced by the dispersal of the Arabs over the conquered countries which they "arabicised" and "managed to hold for a considerable time." Various causes co-operated to this end. We have already mentioned that Islam made full use of the tribal system for its military purposes. Out of it arose the military colonies which were planted in

important political and strategical centres. In the beginning these settlements were few and far between, and may be compared to oases in the foreign world encircling the Arabs. It seemed that, at no distant date, the handful of Arab colonies would be lost in the foreign population amidst which they lived. But this fear proved baseless. The colonists soon found ways and means of multiplying themselves with startling rapidity. Polygamy did a great deal, and the Arab settlers freely availed themselves of it. But whatever be the share of polygamy in this direction—conversion "en masse" was indubitably most effective. With conversion the foreigner acquired the rights of citizenship. He made good his claim to State annuity and shared in all the privileges of the ruling race. Simultaneously with conversion he renounced his language and nationality, and hastened to exchange them for the Arabic language and the Arab nationality. Moreover, he sought and obtained admission into one of the Arab tribes. And it happened thus: he entered into the relationship of a client and was henceforth known as the client of the tribe of N. N. (Kamil, 655; Fihrist, 40). The descendants of these converts were thoroughly "arabicised" in the next generation. They even passed for genuine Arabs whose language and manners they adopted and followed. Even slavery largely contributed to the growth of the ruling race. It was a settled rule, when foreign nations did not submit or conclude a capitulation but offered resistance and were conquered in open warfare, to kill the men and treat the women and children as slaves and divide them as war-booty. Four-fifths were divided among the troops; while a fifth fell to the Caliph (Von Kremer, Vol. I, 412). We can well imagine what a number of slaves thus passed into the possession of the ruling race. The kind treatment which Islam enjoined and the Muslims practised towards the slaves, soon won them over to Islam. They accepted the Arabian language, and many of them received their freedom. As freedmen they acquired the status of clients with their former master and his family. Thus, like an avalanche, the Arab conquerors grew in numbers as they proceeded further and further in their triumphant career. In the accounts of the wars and campaigns of the early times against the unfaithful we read that the army consisted

of so many thousand Arabs and so many thousand clients.[1]

These foreigners were accepted into the tribes. Easier still was the absorption of the conquered by the conquerors in countries where the Arabs found kindred races. Such was very largely the case in the neighbouring countries. Arabia, which must have been very thickly populated, sent out, long before Islam, its migrants to the neighbouring countries. In the cuneiform inscriptions Arabs are mentioned. Evidently Arab tribes were even then in Mesopotamia.[2] The Sinai Peninsula, long before Islam, was predominantly Arab, and even the Nabataeans of Petra were apparently of Arab nationality.[3] There was an old Arab settlement in the Nile Valley. Heliopolis is said to have been founded by the Arabs. Athribis bears an Arab name, and Bubastis had an Arab place of worship. Assyria had a very old Arab population. About 140 years before Christ Emesa and its "environs" had Arab rulers. About 66 years before Christ Tigranes planted numerous Arab tribes in Northern Syria. Even in remote antiquity, parts of Judœa had been "arabicised." The district of Gilead was inhabited by Arab tribes, both settled and nomadic, and precisely the same was the case in Batanaea. There were numerous Arab tribes in the Assyrian Empire, both on the eastern banks of the Tigris and on the Mesopotamian side. The vale of Chabores was occupied by them, and from the lower course of Euphrates an unbroken chain of nomad tribes extended right up to the North, with the result that the predominant portion of the population there was Arab. In the towns, of course, the Aramaic element preponderated. From Mesopotamia the Arab tribes pushed towards Northern Syria, up to Harran and Orrhoe-Edessa. Indeed, from Orrhoe-Edessa there was an Arab settlement right up to the Euphrates. Pliny knew the Rowalla-Beduins of the Syrian desert under the name of Rhoali. They had their seat in the country between Balissus (Bâlis) and the Euphrates.

[1] In Khorasan, under Omar II, there were 20,000 clients in the field, but they were refused both the annuity and the pay. They were, however, given a share of the booty. Ibn Athir, V, 37. Out of the union of the Arabs with the Persians resulted such Arabic-speaking mongrels as Ziyad-al-Ajam and Thabit Katnah.

[2] Spiegel, *Eranische Alterthumskunde*, I, 216.

[3] Blau: Z.D.M.G. XXV, 529, 565.

The tribe of Rhambaei is identical with the great Rabiya tribe which dwelt on the right bank of the Euphrates. There was a strong dash of Arab blood in Palmyra, and in Harran the Arab strain was paramount.[1] These data show how easily the conquerors succeeded in subduing the countries to Islam, and in winning over the subject races to their nationality. True, the native population in Persia and Africa were compact wholes, and there the Arabs did not find people with any affinity or kinship to them; but, there too, their success was swift and sure, for neither the Persians nor the Africans were capable of offering serious resistance to their arms. The conquered Berbers were carefully and systematically trained by the readers of the Qur'an and other religious teachers, and were sedulously drilled into Arabism.[2] In Persia, after three hundred years of Arab rule, the subject-nation rose against the Arab domination, and brought their neglected language to its rightful place of honour: for, with the conquest, Arabic had become the official language, nay, the language of the cultivated circles and even of ordinary parlance. Thus Arabic was the language of the people of Naisapur,[3] as also of the people of Kom,[4] and we infer from the letters of Hamadani that even in Merv and Herat the entire correspondence was carried on in Arabic, and that Arabic was the adopted language of the higher circles. Even in Khorasan, Arabic for a long time supplanted Persian, and reigned supreme.[5]

The consequences of indiscriminate mixing with the subject-races, which Omar I sought to prevent with vigour

[1] Blau: Z.D.M.G. XXV, 525. On the Arab tribes in Mesopotamia. Cf. Z.D.M.G. Vol. X, 437, 462; Aghani, XI, 62.

[2] Von Kremer, *Culturgeschichte*, Vol. I, 232.

[3] Thalabi, Lataif, p. 39.

[4] Isphahani, *Mohadherat*, I, 55.

[5] According to an anecdote preserved in Hamadani, II, Fol. 224, Abdullah Ibn Tahir, Governor of Khorasan, under Mamun, is reported to have known not a word of Persian. Prof. Browne says in his "Lit. Hist. of Persia," Vol. I, that "it is generally assumed that in Persian, as in Arabic, verse preceded prose." P. 12. On p. 13 he says: "All that can be safely asserted is that modern Persian literature, especially poetry, had begun to flourish considerably in Khorasan during the first half of the tenth cen[illegible] during the reign of the Samanid prince Nasr II (A.D. 9[illegible] covers a period of nearly a thousand years, during which time the language has changed so little that the verses of an early poet like Rudagi are at least as plain to a Persian of to-day as is Shakespeare to a modern Englishman."

and severity, did not fail to manifest themselves. The ruling race gained in number, but lost in quality. They lost most of their old tribal virtues. The racial type, too, degenerated, and they quickly took to the vices of the subject-races. But what amply compensated for these losses was the rich inheritance of Greek and Persian civilization.

We shall now discuss the social transformation which resulted from these new conditions,[1] beginning with the Arab town-population. We have already shown the origins of Kufa and Basra. They arose out of military cantonments. In other places too—wherever the conquerors had settled down in large numbers—the same process of development evidences itself. Damascus, Hira, Anbar, Baghdad, each reckoned a large population—outcome of the interbreeding of the conquerors with the native women. With the growth of these towns we perceive a two-fold division of the population: (I) settled town-folk, and (II) folk who were still more or less loyal to the old nomadic ways, to agriculture, to cattle-breeding, to a roving, fighting life.

These social changes synchronize with a change in the constitution of the army. As organized on the pattern of the tribal system, the army now ceases to exist. Mercenary troops step into their place. This change is clear at the time of the first Abbasids. One fact here needs attention. As the dividing-line between the two classes of town-population becomes more and more distinct, we notice the steady recession of the pure Arab element into the background. This means the transfer of rule from the Arab tribe to townsfolk; from the descendants of the first conquerors (pure blooded Arabs) to the half-breeds. Quickly did these become so numerous and so powerful that an old poem thus refers to them: "The sons of concubines have become very plentiful[2] among us. Lead me, O God, to a land where I shall see no bastards." The slave-trade played[3]

[1] The Arabs mixed so freely with the foreign races that thinking minds, among them, began seriously to consider the position of affairs. Ma'arri, in his Lozumiyyat, says: "The world is turned upside down. Everything is mixed up. The mother of a Nomairite is a Turkish lady and that of the Okailite, a slave-girl from Samarqand." I need not add that Nomair and Okail are old Arab tribes—the latter exist up to now.

[2] Kamil, 302.

[3] Mez, *Renaissance Des Islams*. Heidelberg, 1922, pp. 152 *et seq.* This is a masterly work, and should be translated into English. Learned,

an important rôle in the fusion of the Arabs with foreigners. In thousands both white and black slaves were annually imported. The latter came from Zawyla (the then chief town of the province of Fezzan) an important centre of the slave-trade.[1] They also came from Egypt and the east coast of Africa: indeed, in such swarms that, on more than one occasion, serious insurrection occurred. The white slaves, on the other hand, hailed from Central Asia, inhabited by Turkish tribes (Turkistan, Farghana), or from the countries of the Franks and Greeks. Specially brisk was the export from Spain,[2] and highly valued were the slaves of Spanish nationality. They were called *Sakalibah*, which is nothing more or less than the Arabic transcription of the Spanish word *Esclavo*. While a Turkish slave could be purchased for 600 dinars, the Spanish fetched 1,000.[3] No less brisk was the slave-trade from the Italian harbours, especially from Civita Vecchia. Charles the Great taunted Pope Hadrian I for permitting the traffic. His Holiness excused himself by shifting the responsibility to the Greeks and the Lombards. At this time the clergy and the laity alike carried on those activities. Through the help of the Jews they sold to the non-Christians the offspring of their serfs and villains. Certain it is that in the eighth century the Venetians were the most diligent slave-dealers of the time. They had a slave-market of their own in Rome, which Pope Zakaria closed in the year 748.[4] Thus an unbroken stream of foreigners poured into the prosperous towns of the Arab Empire. These were gradually *arabicized*, and in the first or second generation were completely lost in the Arabic-speaking community.[5]

From the townsfolk and the *arabicized* foreigners the Abbasids recruited the main body of their mercenary troops. True, individual Arab tribes—still devoted to the military profession—are met with in the Muslim army of even later

vivid, exhaustive is the survey of Islamic Civilization. Von Kremer and Mez have recalled that civilization from the past, and have made it a living picture.

[1] Yaqubi, p. 134.

[2] Ibn Khurdedbah, p. 81.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

[4] Amari, *Storia dei Musulmani in Sicilia*, II, 169. Muratori, *Annali d'Italia*, 960.

[5] A similar thing happened among the Turks, who recruited their *Janissaries*, to a great extent, from the Christian slaves.

times. We shall defer, for the present, the consideration of the influence which the rise of large towns and the growth of town-population exerted on Islam, and proceed to a review of the position of the neo-Muslims and their clients. According to the principles of Islam the neo-converts were to enjoy precisely the same rights and privileges as the full-blooded Arabs; but these latter were too proud and power-loving to make the theoretical claims of the neo-Muslims practically effective.[1] Omar I had already decreed that a foreigner, converted to Islam, should forfeit his landed properties to his former brothers-in-faith. This measure was due to financial reasons; namely, to maintain the revenue intact. Precisely the same reasons prompted later a yet more drastic limitation of the legal *rights* of the neo-converts. Conversion to Islam signified loss of capitation-tax, but the chief sources of the State-revenue were precisely land and capitation-taxes levied upon non-Muslims. They decided, therefore, that notwithstanding *conversion*, these taxes should be levied as before. Further, when the old practice that no Muslim should own land or other immovable properties gave way—a distinction was made between the full-blooded Arab and the neo-convert. While the former was only liable to a light tax—the tithe—the Zakat—the neo-convert, despite his faith, was made to pay the land-tax and partly even the capitation-tax. Besides this invidious inequality in the matter of taxation, the position of the neo-Muslim was by no means very happy in the civic sphere. Not until the rise of the Abbasids, indeed, did any change for the better take place. The full-blooded Arab despised the neo-converts as of an inferior race. Standing in the relation of clients to the ruling tribes and families, they were collectively called 'clients.' They formed the lowest strata of Muslim society. The highest in the social scale were, of course, the Quraish, *i.e.*, the members of the Mekkan aristocracy. Next to these came the large band of full-blooded Arabs (Sarih), and last of all came the neo-converts, the clients. Sad was their lot. They were never respectfully addressed, but, like servants, were called by their names. The pure Arab could not walk in a line with them, and on festive occasions the very last seats were

[1] See Zydan, pp. 69, *et seq.* Chauvinism of the Arabs.

assigned to them.[1] We notice, however, a distinction between genuine neo-converts and slaves who, by manumission, had passed into the relationship of clients with their former masters. The rule, that the client must not even give his daughter in marriage without the consent of his former owner, evidently applied to those of the latter class.[2] The aversion of the Arabs towards the clients seems to have been inspired by racial type: black-haired brown races, such as the Aramæans, inspired much less aversion than those of the North with white or red complexions and blond or red hair. For this reason the clients of these Aryan tribes were nicknamed 'the red,'[3] while the Arabs loved to call themselves 'the *black*.' In contemporary poetry the nickname of the one with red moustache (Suhb-ul-Sibal) is applied to the clients in Iraq and Persia.[4] In various ways the dislike of the ruling class expresses itself against the neo-converts. Often and often they spoke contemptuously, in one breath, of the clients and Persians or Berbers.[5] It is reported that, in a war against the Kharijites, the Arab soldiers abandoned a comrade of theirs to the enemy because they would not hasten to the help of a client.[6] In these terms does the poet Jarir speak of a man who gave his daughter in marriage to a client: "I see Mokatil marry his daughter to a client; whereas in the days gone by naught but a slave-girl could be married to a despicable slave with red moustache."[7] When an Arab general had beaten the army of the factionist Mukhtar and taken some captive, he wanted to let all the full-blooded Arabs go, but wished to put the clients to the sword.[8]

The poet Jarir—mentioned above—once happened to call on a section of the Anbar-tribe, but, contrary to the Arab custom, received no hospitality at their hands. Offended at this, he penned a satire which, among other things, said: "O! Malik, son of Tarif, if you sell hospitality to your guests you act in violation of the religion and the tradition of your tribe. But say you: We sell it in a lawful way. To this I rejoin: For my sake, indulge in this low practice with

[1] Kamil, 712. [2] Aghani, XI, 154. [3] Kamil, 264.
[4] Kamil, 303. Even in the poetical collection of Abu Tammam (p. 17) the expression occurs 'Suhb-ul-Ajam, the red-haired Persian'. See Goldziher, M.S., Vol. I, p. 136.
[5] Kamil, p. 254. [6] Kamil, 631.
[7] Kamil, 272. [8] Ibn Athir, II, 225.

clients, but be ashamed of it before the Arabs." The old reporter adds that this last verse gave great offence to the clients (Kamil, 262, 263). From all that has been said it is obvious that the ruling classes were in no way inclined to concede complete equality to the neo-converts. The genuine Arab regarded himself as infinitely superior to the Persian or the Aramaean. This contempt on the part of the Arabs led to misunderstanding, and misunderstanding ripened into bitter, fierce, bloody uprisings.[1] This was indeed the main reason which attracted so many clients and Persians to the Kharijite banner.[2] With the rise of the Abbasids happier days dawned on these people. The new dynasty favoured the hitherto down-trodden party, and reposed its trust in the *arabicised* Persians or Arabs settled in Persia and Khorasan who had been completely leavened by the native population. Henceforward the star of the old tribal aristocracy sets, never to rise again. No more is much value set upon pure Arab descent, and the classes—so severely kept apart in the past—the old Arab Muslims and the neo-converts—begin to coalesce, amalgamate, disappear into each other. Henceforward converted Persians, Jews, even Sabaeans, rise to highest positions in the State. Nor do we fail to notice a reaction here and there manifesting itself on the part of foreign nationalities against the Arabs. The contempt with which the ruling Arabs, at the time of the Omayyads, were wont to look upon the Persians and the foreigners called forth a party which not merely claimed equality with the Arabs but were even disposed to exalt the Persians over the Arabs. They relied in support of their contention on the Qu'ran and the traditions of the Prophet, where "the equality of all Muslims" was urged and proclaimed. The "friends of Equality" (Ahl-ul-Taswiyah), as this party was called, maintained that noble descent and succession of famous ancestors, in themselves, were worthless. He only was really noble who distinguished himself by noble deeds and by the nobility of his soul; and

[1] Kamil, 285. Goldziher, in his MS., Vol. I, 139, says that in the reign of Muawiah we find the earliest movement calling the Arab superiority into question.

[2] The Kharijites were the democrats of Islam, See Kamil, 686. Hajjaj compelled the neo-converts, after the suppression of their insurrection, to pay capitation tax. The Governor of Africa, who wanted to do the same, was killed in an insurrection.

in proof of their argument they appealed to an old poem where it was said: "Although I am the son of the Lord of Amir, and her warrior famous in every fight, Amir hath not made me her Lord by right of heritage. God forbid that I should rise through father and mother. But (it is because) I defend her territory, prevent any injury to her, and repulse the attack of her enemies." [1]

The first who conceded equal rights to the 'Mawali' (or clients) with the Arabs was Omar II. He appointed two clients and an Arab as judges at Cairo, and when the Arabs took exception to the appointments of the clients he is reported to have said: "What can I do if the clients work their way up and you lag behind?" [2] Almost as great a sensation was caused when, under Hajjaj, a neo-convert was appointed leader of the prayer at the mosque of Kufa, and later a judge. The people protested that none but an Arab should hold a judgeship.[3] The clients, however, succeeded in outshining the Arabs, for they were the first to devote themselves to learned studies and thereby win for themselves an increasing prestige and regard. They diligently took up theological and juristic studies and were instrumental in introducing foreign ideas into Islam. Through Jewish proselytes—mindful of the commentaries of their Holy Book—came alike the passion for traditions and the impulse to collect them. And to the same source must be traced the keenness for hair-splitting and a note of pedantry in Arabic literature. It is reported of a full-blooded Arab that when asked "what instruction his sons were to receive," he replied: "instruction in the Law of Inheritance," whereupon the other rejoined that that was a study fit only for the clients, and was not becoming to the Arabs, who needed no more for culture than a knowledge of their ancient poets.[4] But with theological and juridical studies the clients made a reputation for themselves, and became judges and jurisconsults. Along with these intellectual strivings, which brought them forward, and which contrasted strangely with the ignorance around them, the clients, in other ways

[1] In my *Islamic Civilization*, I have translated from the Iqd of Ibn Rabbih the extract containing most of the arguments of the Shu'ubiyyah (or the Partisans of the Gentiles) against the Arabs. See *Islamic Civilization*, pp. 132–144, Thacker, Spink, Calcutta.

[2] Maqrizi, Khittat, II. 332. [3] Kamil, 285. [4] Kamil, 264.

too, sought and secured distinction. Almost the entire tax and account departments were in their hand. With all this stir and activity it need not surprise us to find the neo-converts and the clients—the disfavour of the ruling class notwithstanding—rapidly growing more and more in influence. They rose even in the social scale higher and higher until the distinction from which they suffered—obstinately kept up hitherto—passed away. We must here refer to yet another class which, in the first centuries, exercised an extraordinary influence and played a conspicuous rôle in civil life. We mean the *Dehkans*.

A purely agrarian feudalism was the basis of the old Persian Empire. A considerable number of land-owners—apparently descendants of the old tribal chiefs—stood at the head of the Persian peasantry. Each of these, in his own domain, was supreme, and had a determining voice in the affairs of its people. He represented the interests of his tenants as against the Provincial and Central Government. He collected taxes and exercised the rights which a big landowner exercises over his tenants. By timely conversion to Islam, these Dehkans succeeded in retaining their power and influence. Moreover, the Arab conquerors—inexperienced, and thus inefficient, in administrative work—left almost entirely to the Dehkans the profitable duty of collecting taxes. Attempts, indeed, were made to remove them and employ genuine Arabs in their stead, but no sooner was this experiment tried than the taxes fell into arrears, and complaints of unmerciful treatment became painfully frequent. Punctual were the Dehkans in the collection of taxes, and humane and merciful in their dealings with the tax-payers. (Ibn Athir, IV, 116.)

Most of the Mesopotamian Dehkans had accepted Islam by the time of the Caliph Omar I who, like a true statesman, treated them with the utmost kindness, and even allowed them state-annuities.[1] Their names show that they were of mixed nationality. Some, indeed, were genuine Aryans; others Aramaeans. For a long time they managed to retain their position. Even under Mamun the Dehkans of Samarqand are mentioned (Jahidh, *Addad*, fol. 12). Under Mutasim

[1] According to Beladhuri, 457, who gives the list of names, every one received 1,000 dirhams a year.

they took part in an insurrection which was an insurrection in a national sense and was directed against the foreign rule of the Arabs. (De Goeje; Frag. Hist. Arab. II, 506.) Among the Dehkans may be reckoned that noble Persian, Firuz, of whom Mobarrad speaks. Belonging to one of the most aristocratic families Firuz accepted Islam, and became the client of the tribe of Bal'Anbar. Famous for his riches and his generosity alike, it is related of him that once the son of a Persian lady, married to an Arab (whom his relatives despised on account of his Persian origin), pointed to Firuz who happened to be passing by, and said: "He is my maternal uncle, and which of you has one nobler than he?" Firuz heard it. The lad was given a house and a present of 100,000 dirhams. One other story. Firuz joined the insurrection of clients against Hajjaj. When the two armies met face to face at Rostakabad, Hajjaj, through his heralds, announced a reward of 10,000 dirhams to the one who brought the head of Firuz. Out of the crowd stepped Firuz, and called out:[1] "100,000 dirhams will I give to him who brings the head of Hajjaj to me. I am Firuz, and you know I keep my word." Taken captive, Hajjaj tried to discover and appropriate Firuz's riches. One favour and one alone, Firuz asked of Hajjaj before execution. He wished to be taken before the people, to name his debtors and trustees. When actually taken before the people, instead of naming his debtors and trustees he loudly declared, in the presence and hearing of all, "Let him—whoever be his trustee or debtor—keep the money as a present and a gift from me." He further granted freedom to his slaves, and dedicated the rest of his property to pious uses. Hajjaj, deceived and baulked, seething with rage, had him cruelly executed.

In the writings of the first centuries the Dehkans are frequently referred to as rich and powerful people living prosperously on their estates and enjoying high esteem. They are reported to have had the best wines in their cellars.[2] In the old fables and poems the charming daughters of the Dehkans fill a prominent place, and many a good Muslim deemed it a piece of rare fortune to wed one of these.[3]

[1] Kamil, 656.

[2] Diwan of Muslim Ibn Walid. Ed. De Goeje, 166, V, 10.

[3] The story of Mansur the second Abbasid Caliph, who, before his accession, concealed himself in a Dehkan's house and married his daughter—Ibn Hamdun, Fol. 237.

It now remains to speak of the subject-races, professing other faiths than Islam, whom we have mentioned as the third great class living within the bosom of the Caliphate.

People professing other faiths—especially those professing a revealed religion—enjoyed, as against the payment of land and capitation taxes—imposed upon them by the terms of the capitulation—a wide toleration. Without interference they could perform their divine service, deal with the affairs of their community, maintain their churches, cloisters, chapels, except in large towns where their number was limited—in fact they could even build new ones. The centres of Muslim population were the large towns. In country places, where conversion *en masse* did not take place, the old population predominated. They were left unmolested so long as they paid their taxes. Such was the case in the mountainous districts of Lebanon and Anti Lebanon. These old inhabitants are described by the Arab authors of the earliest times as *Jaragima* or Nabat, *Nabataeans*, *i.e.*, foreigners.

The subject-races really began to feel the pressure of foreign domination only when the Arab rule was firmly established. It was then that they were gradually driven to resistance.[1] Thus, under Abdul Malik, rebelled the natives of the hill-regions of Lebanon and Taurus.[2] In Egypt the Copts rose several times, and were suppressed after much bloodshed. In Africa the old inhabitants—the Berbers—repeatedly shook off the Arab yoke. In Iraq conditions were different. There, the Arab conquerors were numerous, and though there was a considerable foreign population—descendants of the old Babylonians and Assyrians—described by the Arabs as *Yarmaqi* or *Yarmaquani* —yet, owing to the peculiar formation of the country and absence of mountainous neighbourhoods, national resistance was hopeless and national uprising an impossibility.[3] But this inability of the native population to rise caused them to turn their talents in other directions. They flung themselves with fiery ardour into the political and religious warfares which only too frequently broke out in this province. Strongest

[1] Dozy, *Hist. des musulmans de L'espagne*, II, 49.
[2] Ibn Athir, IV, 250, 251. Beladhuri, 159–163. *Cf.* Assemani, Bibl. Orient, I, 50.
[3] Ibn Kutaiba, 317. Ibn Athir, IV, 386.

and most violent was the anti-Arab feeling in the Eastern countries of the ónce Persian Empire—inhabited by people of supposed Aryan descent. At the earliest opportunity some provinces—such as Tabaristan and Sijistan—succeeded in securing a complete or partial independence. While in Syria and Egypt and Iraq the Christians were allowed to keep up their churches and cloisters, the Persians were conceded no such privilege. Their fire-temples were all to be destroyed, and, under the Omayyads, Obaidullah Ibn Ziyad, Governor of Iraq, appointed a special officer for this purpose. But it appears that—as they say in the Levant—this officer appreciated his position with much understanding; for he made, in this mission, a fortune of 40 million dirhams (Ibn Hamdun, I, 115). He left almost all the fire-temples intact, and received a suitable recompense. Thus most of the places of worship of the Parsis remained untouched, and the famous temple at Shyz in Armenia continued even into later times (Ibn Khurdedbah, p. 96, Shahrastani I, 299). As regards the synagogues there never seems to have been any objection or opposition. Even the heathen Temple at Harran continued up to the XIIth century with its genuine pagan worship.[1] Alongside of the Christians and Fire-worshippers, to whom the majority of the subject-races belonged, there lived other smaller religious communities, such as the Jews—scattered all over the Empire—; the Samaritans—confined to Nablus—; insignificant from the point of view of civilization; the Manichæans and the Harranians. In addition to these there were quite a number of small sects which owed their origin to Christian, Persian and Manichæan influences, or were the surviving remnants of the old heathen pre-Christian worship.

The Christians of the East stood then, as they do now, under the influence of a power-loving, place-seeking clergy. The influence thus exercised was somewhat similar to that subsequently exercised by Muslim *ulemas* over their co-religionists. The Christian clergy, in Byzantine times, when that empire was too weak to control them, had grown considerably in numbers and influence. They were well

[1] In Harran the last temple of the Sabians was only destroyed in 628 A.H. by the Mogols. Chowlsohn: *Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus*, (Petersburg, 1856), pp. 232, 667.

endowed. They acquired landed property too, and possessed numerous cloisters, churches and chapels. In the towns the Muslim Government—not rarely even the rabble, always prone to plunder—made many an encroachment upon their power and wealth, but in the country they lived undisturbed; for, to a certain extent, the Arabs believed in the monks. With care and diligence the monks utilized the lands belonging to them. Partly they themselves personally cultivated and attended to the lands. Nor were the wines neglected; some cloister vintages, indeed, acquired great fame and popularity. A good source of income to the monks was, doubtless, the wine-trade. Thus a poet speaks of a vintage: "It is a wine, preserved in casks, and is made in Rosafa, and at a high price do the monks sell it." [1] Many other trades were carried on in the monasteries. As now, so in the past, monasteries were the meeting centres of the neighbouring people for markets, fairs, popular festivals (Mujam, II, 650), and the like. There were nunneries too. Also there were places where nuns and monks lived together.

Usually the cloisters, situated amidst charming surroundings, were resorted to for change of air. Princes and magnates loved to pass the night there in their travels, or when on a hunting expedition. When cloisters happened to be on frequented commercial routes, even travellers found lodging and food there. Not infrequently the monks carried on medical pursuits. There were even places where miracles took place—holy shrines, graves of saints, whither the sick and the pious made pilgrimages for cure, for devotion, for fulfilment of vows. In Baghdad itself there were several Christian churches and cloisters. From all that has been said we may infer that Islam, in its early career, was by no means intolerant. Certainly, its religio-politics excelled by far those of the Middle Ages, which were conspicuously marked by a spirit of fierce fanaticism and persecution.[2]

[1] *Muslim Ibn Walid.* Ed. De Goeje, 213, V. 2. Cf. *Mujam*, II, 642, 643, 644.

[2] Livingstone, in his *Greek Genius* at pp. 47–48 says: "Between 1566 and 1619 Carnesecchi was burned alive; Bruno was burned alive; Palearío was burned alive; these three at Rome. Vanini was burned at Toulouse. Valentino Gentile was executed by Calvinists at Berne. Campanella was cruelly tortured and imprisoned for twenty-seven years at Naples. Galileo was forced to humble himself before ignorant

But not always did the position of the Christians remain so favourable. In fact we notice a striking difference between Christians who lived in towns and those who lived in the country. By trade and commerce and money-lending the former made fortunes for themselves and lived in affluence and security; while the latter suffered and sighed under the weight of a heavy land-tax and the oppression of extortionate governors. In the earliest times Christians were allowed free access to the mosque,[1] and were held in high esteem at the court. The Christian poet Akhtal was the court poet in Damascus. The father of John of Damascus was the first councillor of the Caliph Abdul Malik. The Christians—as already mentioned—held the entire accounts department and the board of taxes in their hand. Often, indeed, Muslim jealousy sought to displace them from their position, but it was impossible to do without them. In Iraq they shared this influence with the Persians and the Dehkans, who were in precisely the same position.[2] The short-sighted Omar II excluded them from all public offices, and a similar policy was adopted by the first Abbasid Caliph.[3] Ordinances hostile to Christians were issued even under Harun. In the year 191 A.H. (807 A.D.) he commanded all churches in the border-countries to be demolished, and directed the members of the tolerated sects to dress differently from Muslims.[4] In Africa Ibrahim Ibn Aghlab passed stringent measures against the Christians and Jews.[5] The Caliph Mutawakkil renewed, in an aggravated form, hostile measures against the Christians. The Caliph Muqtadir forbade the appointment of other than Muslims as physicians and money-changers, and added that they should dress differently from Muslims (Ibn Taghribardi,

and arrogant monks, and to hide his head in a country villa. Sarpi felt the knife of an assassin. In this way did Italy devour her sons of light." These, of course, are famous victims (see Symonds, *The Catholic Reaction*, II, 138). Symonds estimates that *in Spain alone*, between 1481 and 1525, 234, 526 persons were condemned for heresy by the Inquisition. Compare with this assiduous and sterilizing tyranny (I am applying to the Muslims Livingstone's language on p. 48) the occasional infractions of liberty of thought in the Muslim Empire.

[1] Aghani, IV, 182. VII, 179–187.
[2] Ibn Athir, V, 167. Aghani, XIX, 59–61.
[3] Ibn Athir, V, 49. Theophanes: *Chronographia* under 751 A.D.
[4] Ibn Athir, VI, 141.
[5] Amari, Storia dei Musulmani, II, 56.

she had studied their books. In literary circles, particularly, Manichaeanism found ready and eager adherents. The Barmacides are said to have been secret Manichaeans; and as, under Caliph Mamun, free-thinking ran no risk, it was fashionable to play the sceptic and to profess disdain for orthodoxy. Especially wide-spread was Manichaeanism in the eastern provinces of the Empire—Persia, Khorasan, Transoxiana—but in other regions too, the Manichaeans had their places of worship. St. Augustine has called attention to the splendid get-up of their religious books. Their charming appearance allured the Arabs, and they soon had them rendered into Arabic.[1] In Kufa a Manichaean community appears to have existed early in point of time, which even in the unhappy days of persecution secretly assembled to perform their religious worship. They sang hymns in Arabic—a practice which they actually continued when in prison (Aghani, XII. 74).

Though the Harranians and Sabæans were not devotees of revealed religions—and so were outside the pale of protection—yet, as a matter of fact, they received from the Muslim Government protection and recognition, as did the others of the tolerated cults. These mostly lived in the town of Harran in Mesopotamia, but they were not quite unknown even in Baghdad and Northern Mesopotamia in the XIth century.[2]

From the most numerous communities—Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians and Manichaeans—to the least numerous, all had the completest freedom in the management of their domestic and religious affairs. It appears that even in matters[3] of civil and criminal justice—so long as they did not come into conflict with Muslims—they were entirely in the hands of their spiritual guides. The matter stood thus. In the capital of the Empire these religious communities were represented by their clergy, who looked after their affairs and defended their rights. The Christians who lived in Iraq and the neighbouring eastern countries belonged, in

[1] Portions of the translation are preserved in the *Fihrist* and have been made known by Flügel.

[2] Further information on this subject will be found in the learned work of Chwolsohn: *Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus*. Petersburgh 1856.

[3] The Christians in Cordova had their own Christian judges. Makkari, I, 84. *On the Christians in Spain*: Baudisson. *Eulogues und Alvar.*—Leipzig, pp. 11, 16.

an overwhelming majority, to the Nestorian sect, which, by reason of the persecution of the clerical party, ascendant in the Byzantine Empire, had fled to and found safety in the Persian Empire. For this reason the Nestorian patriarch had already, *i.e.*, even before the Islamic conquest, his seat at Ctesiphon, the capital of the Persian kings. Here he remained until its fall and the rise of Baghdad. Then he transferred his seat to a place not far from the residence of the Caliph. This happened in the year 726 A. D. (Ritter, *Erdkunde* IX, 671.) Here he occupied a special palace which stood on the western side of Baghdad and was known as *Dar-al-Rum*, *i.e.*, the palace of the Greeks. Here was also the church of St. Mary, where the Nestorian patriarchs were usually buried.[1] Round the seat of the patriarch grew the Christian quarter of the town. The patriarchs appear later to have changed their residence to the eastern side, for a Greek cloister is specially mentioned, and it is further added that there was a beautiful Nestorian church besides, where the Katholicos had his residence.[2] Just by the side of it stood the church of the Jacobites, which was also conspicuous by its rich decoration and architectural splendour. Moreover, there were several churches and cloisters in the eastern and the western quarters of the town. On the west side of the Sarah-canal were the monastery of St. Phetion, the church of *Sabar-Jesu*, and a Nestorian monastery called *Khalil-Jesu*. The cloisters of Zandaward, Samalu, and Darmalis lay to the east; the cloisters of Dorta were on the western side of the town. Often, to be sure, in times of stress and unrest, these Christian places of worship suffered; but in spite of such vicissitudes the Nestorian patriarch remained on, and enjoyed great respect in Baghdad, right up to the fall of the Caliphate. So great was his position that he was accounted an important political factor. At the court of Baghdad the influence of the Nestorian patriarch exceeded by far that of the head of any other Christian sect or party. Jacobites especially were completely overshadowed by the Nestorians.

[1] In the *Kitabul-Mowashsha*, Fol. 171, a native of Baghdad relates what fine Christian girls he saw gathered, on a feast day, in the Church of St. Mary.

[2] *Dair-al-Rum* is often mistaken for *Dar-al-Rum* situated on the western side.

They were distrusted because of their avowed partiality for the Byzantines. The Nestorian patriarchs made good use of this distrust and suspicion in forwarding their interest and maintaining their prestige. The Nestorian patriarch, or *Katholicos* as he was called, always did his best to prevent the Jacobite patriarch from obtaining official permission to reside in Baghdad. Thus, in the year 300 A.H. (912–3 A.D.), the Nestorian patriarch procured an order from the Caliph prohibiting the Jacobite metropolitan from permanently residing at Baghdad.[1] In 394 A.H. (1003–4 A.D.) a similar order was made afresh; namely, an order prohibiting the Jacobite metropolitan from having a permanent residence at Baghdad. But, despite all this, the Jacobite bishop did remain at Baghdad. The Jacobite metropolitan, however, had his seat at Tikrit, and only, from time to time, came to Baghdad. The Nestorians availed themselves of the favourable conditions, and secured a distinguished position for themselves. The Nestorian patriarch posed before the Government as the chief of the entire Christian community —the Jacobites included among them—and was, in fact, recognized as such. In a letter of appointment of a Nestorian patriarch which comes from the VIth century of the A.H. it is stated: "It has pleased the Supreme Authority to appoint thee in Baghdad as the patriarch of the Nestorians as of the rest of the Christians residing in Muslim countries—the administrator of their affairs."[2] We see from this that the Caliphs regarded the patriarch of the Nestorians as the head of the entire Christian community in the East. As their election took place in the capital the Caliphs could always manage to have their own man elected. For the election of the new patriarch the seven metropolitans of Jundashapur, Basra, Mosul, Irbyl, Beth-Jarma, Hulwan and Nisib assembled, each accompained by the three bishops of his jurisdiction. After receiving the confirmation of the entire conclave of bishops, the patriarch-elect obtained investiture from the Caliph who exercised a potent influence in the election. That influence is beyond doubt: we have definite information on

[1] Assemani, Bibl., or II, 441. The patriarch of Antioch had to give a written declaration on his own behalf and that of his successors.

[2] Ibn Hamdun, I, Fol. 222. For this document, Z.D.M.G., Vol. VII, p. 215.

the subject.[1] The officers of the Diwan had practically the appointment in their hand, and the candidate had to secure their favour. Twenty-five was the number of the metropolitans in the entire Caliphate—with 6 to 12 bishops under each. These facts show that the position of the Christians was by no means unfavourable. Without interference they built churches. Thus, in the year 150 A.H. (767 A.D.), they built a church in Tikrit, and in Baghdad the patriarch Timotheus (d. 204 or 205 A.H.)—who held office under five Caliphs—Mahdi, Hadi, Harun, Amin, Mamun—built the cloister of *Khalil-Jesu*. The Jacobite patriarch had his seat at Antioch where, in the year 711, at the command of the Caliph Walid I, a Jacobite church was built. The number of Jacobite bishoprics was close upon fifty. This sketch should suffice to convey a correct idea of the position of the Christians and their clergy. We now pass on to the Jews, whose spiritual chief—the *Rosh-Galutha*, or "*Prince of the Captivity*" likewise resided in Baghdad, as he had done of old in Babylon. According to Benjamin Tudela who visited Baghdad in 1170 A.D., the *Prince of the Captivity*, as head of the Jewish community, enjoyed great esteem. At this time one Rabbi Daniel Ben Chisdai, a descendant of David, held this office. His authority over the Jewish community was confirmed by the Caliph. All—Jews or Muslims—had to rise before him. When he went for an audience with the Caliph, he was generally accompanied by a large retinue of horsemen. On such occasions he dressed in embroidered silk, and wore a white turban gleaming with gems. Ahead of him marched the herald, calling out loudly: "Make room for the Son of David." His power extended over Mesopotamia, Persia, Khorasan, South-Arabia, Diar-Bakr, Armenia, Georgia as far as the Oxus, nay even as far as India and Tibet. He confirmed the election of the Rabbis and the appointment of the officers of the Temple; for without his consecration none could assume office. We must not, then, be surprised to hear that presents from the most distant countries flowed to him. This '*Prince of the Captivity*' had houses, gardens, plantations, large landed-estates in Babylonia, inherited from his ancestors. He collected the income from the Jewish inns and markets, and levied a toll on their merchandise. Daily

[1] Assemani, Bibl. Or II, III, 442.

dined at his table a number of Israelites. Nevertheless at his own investiture he had to pay large sums of money to the Caliph and the princes of his house. His installation and confirmation were effected in the Caliph's palace, by the Caliph laying on his hands. After this was done he returned home accompanied by music. There in turn, he, blessed the members and elders of his community by a similar laying on of hands. This traveller relates that in Baghdad lived many rich and learned Jews, and that there were 28 synagogues in and about Baghdad. The chief synagogue was adorned with pillars of variegated marble, and was richly ornamented with silver and gold. The pillars bore inscriptions and passages from the Psalms in letters of gold. Ten marble steps led to the altar where lay the roll of Torah.

Of the other religious sects we can only say this much, that the Supreme Spiritual Head of the Manichaeans had his seat in Babylon until the time of Muqtadir, whose severity compelled them to leave the Caliph's land (Flügel, *Mani*, 105, 108). It was under the Omayyads that they removed the seat of their spiritual chief to Babylon. Elsewhere did the Zoroastrians and the Sabæans have their centre of gravity, and so also other small religious sects. Only in special cases did they send one or other to the capital to represent their cause. Generally they left their interests in the hands of such members of their community as held influential offices in Baghdad. Such was particularly the case with the Sabæans, for several of their brothers-in-faith held high offices at the court.

XV

LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES UNDER THE CALIPHATE

RAPIDLY did Islam establish its world-empire. The new religion—transfigured, so to speak, by its amazing successes—overcame every opposition and stifled every form of independent spiritual or intellectual activity. And yet soon enough did these activities conspicuously manifest themselves. The very condition of things raised questions calling for the most diverse interpretations. The study of the Qur'an too evoked matters extremely contentious and controversial. Of such those that chiefly engaged the attention of the first generation of Muslims were: the conception of the Unity of God (Tawhid); the nature of sovereignty, and the dispute arising therefrom, whether sovereignty should go to the family of the Omayyads or the descendants of Ali (Mufazalah); the precise meaning of the terms used in the Qur'an—belief (Iman), unbelief (Kufr), and predestination (Qadr). These were the new ideas that were in the air. They were in a state of flux. They were neither precisely settled nor were they logically defined. To take up these unsettled questions was the first intellectual exercise of the Muslims—by no means a light or easy exercise.

The question of sovereignty was the first to come to the front. Kharijites and the Shiites brought it to an obtrusive prominence by their wars which, for long, filled the most flourishing provinces with the devastating horrors of fire and sword. Along with this were debated, with much heat and passion, questions relating to the punishment awaiting the faithful and the unfaithful in the life to come. The Kharijites—fierce, fanatical puritans—declared all, not of their party, unfaithful whose blood it was permissible to shed and with whom no alliance was conceivable. They

even went the length of maintaining that every Muslim, guilty of a serious sin, was eternally damned. Even the innocent children of the unfaithful were, according to them worthy of the same horrifying doom. In their opinion a passive faith was no faith at all. It must be a faith active, *i.e.* militant.

A wholly opposite path was taken by the Shiites, who opposed both the Kharijites and the Omayyad Government. They carried their legitimist enthusiasm to the point of fastening upon their hereditary princes the old Persian and Buddhistic ideas of incarnation in human form; nay, they strayed into all manner of wild, extravagant excesses.[1] Even Judæo-Christian doctrines found their way among them. The most striking illustration of this we have in the largely diffused belief in the doctrine of *Raj'ah* (the return) among the Shiites of the earliest times. To believe in this doctrine meant practically faith in the resurrection of Ali—nay the resurrection of man, a certain period after death (usually forty days). It is not difficult to prove that this idea was of Judæo-Christian origin. Witness the story of the resurrection of Jesus! Even earlier this belief existed. According to the popular belief the Prophet Enoch and Elia were not dead, but were resting alive in their graves at Hebron. As in the Christian tradition, so in the earliest sects of Islam, we notice the number of days fixed at forty. Finally, in the history of the Apostles, the period that Jesus continued to live on earth after his resurrection was set down as forty days.[2]

While the Shiites and the Kharijites gave a political colour to the question of sovereignty—the Murjiites treated it from a purely religious standpoint. We must trace the origin of the Murjiah sect to Syria or North Arabia. A son of Ali (Mohamed Ibn al Hanafiya) is said to have founded it. He resided in these countries and died in Syria. This sect found a large following in Iraq and other provinces. The pious Sa'id Ibn Jubair,[3] who lived in Kufa, belonged to this sect. About this time a high military officer under the Omayyads composed a poem in which he defended the doctrines of the Murjiites. This is the oldest document on the subject, and gives us sure information regarding the

[1] Legacy of Rome, p. 49. [2] Luke, 24, 33–34.
[3] Maqrizi, II, 350. He died 95 A.H. according to the *Tahzib*, p. 279.

Murjiite views and doctrines.[1] It is clear from this that the Murjiites specially busied themselves with the definition and exposition of their faith. They disapproved of the great weight which the Kharijites attached to faith militant. They held it wrong to shed blood over religious disputes. In opposition to the Kharijites they taught that no Muslim was eternally damned for a mere sin, nor was he to be set down as unfaithful for a mere difference of opinion. They accepted, on the whole, the orthodox position, and never really came into collision with it. Upon predestination, indeed, they laid a special emphasis.

Different was the case with the Qadirites—a party which stands in close relation to the Murjiites—indeed an offshoot of theirs.[2] This sect arose in Damascus.[3] And Damascus proved a congenial soil, even if we reject the story that the Caliph Wazed II actually joined this sect.[4] In opposition to the rigid belief in predestination inculcated by the Qur'an, acclaimed by the orthodox, and accepted by the Murjiites, the Qadirites proclaimed the freedom of the will—the outstanding doctrine of their sect. Thus, with this new doctrine they brought a new weapon of far-reaching consequences into the spiritual conflicts of the day. These opposing doctrines, deftly woven together, prove the intellectual and spiritual activities of those times. One of the earliest Qadirites—Ghailan—was a Murjiite and a Qadirite in one, for he laid stress upon the formal portion of the faith without, like the Kharijites, making militant zeal a condition precedent to being a good Muslim. And yet, on the question of sovereignty, he adopted the democratic view, which held every Muslim eligible for election to the Caliphate. In this he sided with the Kharijites, but from the Murjiites he differed on the question of predestination and struck out a new path

[1] Sabit Katnah, *cf.* Aghani, XIII, p. 52. Khuda Bukhsh, *Islamic Civilization*.

[2] Ghailan the founder of the Qadirite sect was a Murjiite at the same time.

[3] According to Ibn Kutaiba (p. 241), Ghailan of Damascus was the first after Mabad Johani to teach the doctrine of free-will. He is said to have been a Christian of Egyptian descent. As for Johani precise information is wanting as to where he made his appearance first. But we are informed that Yunus, the father of the above-mentioned Ghailan, taught both Mabad and his son the doctrine of free-will. *Cf.* Hammer—Purgstall, Lit. Geschichte, II, 152.

[4] There are reasons for doubting this story, Dhahabi, Ibar.

of his own. (Shahrastani, p. 160.) This instance proves clearly the strange combinations that were effected, and explains the origin of a large number of sects which sprang up. But this was going a trifle too far, and was certainly not conducive to a right understanding of things. Under the influence of a tradition—invented probably in the first or second century after the Prophet—which said that the religion of Islam would be split up into 72 sects, they sought to make up that number. And this they did by making some solitary differing view the basis of a new sect. Besides the orthodox party, only the four above-mentioned sects may really be called distinct religious sects in Islam.

It cannot but have been noticed that the two countries which unmistakably called forth the spiritual ferment were Syria and Iraq. To the Euphrates we must look for the birth of the Shiites and the Kharijites—to Syria for the Murjiites and the Qadirites. We have already alluded to the influences at work on Shiism. It remains, now, for us to consider the Murjiites and the Qadirites. Here we are guided, not by authenticated documents, but by probabilities, for there is a dearth of information on the subject. Hence, the impossibility of positive certainty. In Damascus, the new capital of the empire, the Arabs came into daily contact with the conquered people of the land. These were originally Aramaic, but, under the long Greco-Byzantine sway, they were completely Hellenized—particularly in the Syrian towns. In Damascus Byzantine learning had made a home, and this learning was pre-eminently of a theological character. In the beginning of the Arab rule there lived in this town influential Byzantine ecclesiastical writers, whose activity shows us that the local theological school, was by no means a negligible school in the Byzantine Empire. In the complete indifference of the Arab conquerors towards peoples of other faiths, it may be assumed that the Byzantine theologians were left undisturbed in their studies and meditations so long as they faithfully fulfilled their obligations under the capitulations. Their folios were full of subtleties. They waged theological warfares. They indulged in polemics. And thus they passed their time. Were it not for a circumstance which gave events an unexpected turn, their intellectual activities would have continued unobserved. Slowly did the conquerors awaken from their original indifference to the

subject races. It offended them to see so many people of other faiths in the capital of Islam.

The Christians, full of Byzantine arrogance, trained in the school of impatience, and treated but lightly in the capitulations under Omar I, may themselves have given much offence by their defiant attitude to the rising spirit of Islam. The ecclesiastical heads of Damascus betrayed a strange lack of wisdom by thoughtlessly embarking on polemics against Islam. But the mystery of the Trinity which had already in the Byzantine Empire evoked bitter party strifes, was, so to speak, the Scylla and Charybdis where the Christian theologians always suffered shipwreck. As against this inexplicable dogma the Saracens always put forth the answer of the Qur'an (Sura 112): "God is one, the eternal. He begets not nor is He begotten. Nor is any one like unto Him." Among the theologians living at that time in Damascus two names stand out in bold prominence. They were those of John of Damascus and Theodore Abucara. Though not all, yet some of their writings have come down to us. John was of genuine Greek descent, and his family was of considerable influence in the town. Theodore Abucara, as his name suggests, was probably of Syrian origin. The father of John—Sergius—though a Christian, held a high position under the Caliph Abdul Malik. He was probably the Caliph's Chancellor of the Exchequer. To his son John, Sergius gave a careful education, particularly in philology and theology. On the death of the father the Caliph appointed John as his successor in office. But John soon retired from the world, and took up his residence in the Cloister of Saba, where he died about 780 A.D.[1] The chief service of John consists in establishing for the first time in the Orient a school of theology which was liberalized by philosophy and reason.

John of Damascus may be regarded as the father of the scholastic divines of the Middle Ages. For many centuries his writings passed in the East as unexcelled masterpieces, and their influence was felt in every sphere of theological activity. He used his pen specially against Islam, and in his writings we find a dialogue between a Christian and a Saracen.

Theodore Abucara—regarding whom precise information fails us—died 826 A.D. He, too, has bequeathed to us

[1] According to Geisler, he died about 760 A.D.

dialogues between Christians and Muslims which are, as may be expected, religious polemics, pure and simple. It may be taken as certain that written discussions between Muslims and Christians not only preceded but followed oral discussions. And such polemical discussions increased to so alarming an extent that in Antioch, the most important town after Damascus, theological discussions were forbidden by a far-sighted Governor, Amir Salem, because of the danger of a breach of the peace and consequent embitterment of feelings.[1] From the writings of the Church Fathers we know exactly the subjects round which controversy whirled. They related to the nature and the attributes of Divinity, and to the questions concerning Predestination and Free-will. In his writings John of Damascus particularly emphasises that God only wills what is good, and that, therefore, all that is good is exactly what God wills. In dialogues between Christians and Saracens the origin of good and evil holds a very prominent place, and is invariably a subject of minute and lively discussion. Like the origin of good and evil, the doctrine of the freedom of the will too is equally conspicuous. Man, they argued, is master of himself, the voluntary author of his deeds. Thus thinks and thus teaches John of Damascus. These questions, to be sure, were frequently discussed between Muslims and Christians. They led the Muslims on to the groove of Byzantine theology and initiated them into the skill and dexterity of the Byzantine dialectic. These discussions account, without a doubt, for the earliest dogmatic and religio-philosophic efforts in Islam. Thus the discussion of the principles of faith (Usul) with which the Muslims early busied themselves was naught but a reflection of the Greek intellectual activity in that very direction. No less striking is the prominence given both in the Greek and Muslim theology to the enquiry into the unity of God (Tawhid). To the same Byzantine source we must trace the controversy regarding the divine attributes which agitated the Muslim theologians, and to it, too, we must refer the doctrine of the Murjiites which denied Eternal Punishment. On the latter question there was a complete unanimity between the Byzantine theologians and the exponents of the Murjiite sect. But if clear and unmistakable is the Christian influence on the Murjiites—more so still is the

[1] Theophanes, Chronographie, born 663.

Christian influence on the Qadirites—the expounders of free-will in Islam.[1] Under the stress of foreign influence the Arab mind fell into a state of ferment, and threw itself with ardour into similar political and theological discussions. In the first century of the Hegira these discussions powerfully laid hold of the Arab mind, for into their service were pressed not merely the forces of the mind but of arms too. And fierce and bitter were the fights.

But despite conditions not really very congenial to the peaceful pursuit of letters, and despite complete lack of contemporary evidence, we can yet, to some extent, form an idea of the literary efforts of the earliest period of Arab civilization, at least, in one field of non-religious activity. It was the Science of Language which they founded by inventing Grammar. What directly led to it was the study of the Qur'an. It was found imperative to settle the rules for the correct reading and recitation of the Holy Book. But in this they took, not the living language, but the Qur'anic diction as the standard to go by. It is beyond doubt that the revelations were in the dialect of Mekka, and, beyond doubt, too, that in the course of years, the text, by reason of its diffusion over large tracts of countries and amid countless foreign peoples, was tampered with and corrupted. The founders of the Arabic Grammar completely disregarded these facts, and accepted the text as they found it, or as it should have been according to their judgment. Thus, the Arab Grammar, from its very outset, stood in conflict with the current speech of the Arab people. All this notwithstanding, Arabic Grammar was a great intellectual achievement. Independently it was worked out with striking skill and talent. We can realize its importance and difficulty alike when we recall that even so gifted a nation as the Greeks did not, until the time of the Alexandrian school, possess a grammar of their language. But we must not forget that the highest rôle and the most weighty contribution to the science of language is to be ascribed to the foreign converts to Islam. They urgently needed instruction and direction in the correct reading and recitation of the Qur'an. That this need was first felt in Basra, where, in the early days of Islam, there was a strong commingling

[1] Khuda Bukhsh, *Islamic Civilization*, pp. 58 *et sqq.* See, Pfannmüller, *Handbuch der Islam-Literatur*, pp. 256 *et sqq.*

of the Arab with foreign elements, is a fact which lends support to what has just been stated.

Most Arab writers look upon Abul Aswad-ul-Duali as the founder of Arabic Grammar; but against this we have the positive statement that a Persian was really the founder.[1]

What we do owe to Duali is the introduction of the reading-points. He introduced the signs above, before or under the letters to indicate the vowels, *a*, *i*, *o*.[2] Undoubted it is that these vowel-points were importations from the Syriac, and therefore here too over again is a case of borrowing from the foreigners. Be that as it may, this first step was of momentous consequence for further development. Henceforward it is not the Arabs but the clients who distinguish themselves in linguistic studies. A Nabataean from Messene (Maisan)—Anbasa—was one of the renowned pupils of Duali.[3] These foreigners who enthusiastically applied themselves to the study of the Arabic language, the Qur'an and the Sunna, as also to Arab poetry, which they pressed into their service for purposes of explanation and elucidation, were, in fact, the real founders of the philological studies of those times.

But, as they took no account of the corruption of the text due to failure of memory, or to mistakes in transcription, and relied solely upon the Qur'an as they found it, to fashion the rules of the Arabic language they came more and more into conflict with the living speech of the people.[4] In the conflict, however, between narrow scholasticism and the living spirit, the victory remained with the former.

The idea of revising the text of the Qur'an presented itself to one of these philologists—Isa Takafy—but it was a hopeless idea, and bore no fruit.[5] A step, almost as important

[1] See, Ibn Khallikan, under Hajjaj Ibn Yusuf. Kitab-ul-tafhif of Askari (d. 382 A.H.).

[2] Abdur Rahman Ibn Hurmuz, Fihrist, p. 39. Flügel, *Grammat. Schulen der Araber*, p. 26, treats this question in his usual uncritical way. He regards the statement in the Fihrist regarding Duali as conclusive (p. 41), but he forgets that Nadr Ibn Shumail (d. 203 or 204 A.H.), who is cited as an authority, lived about 150 years after Duali. See Ibn Khallikan (Eng. Trans.), Vol. I, pp. 662 and 666, note (7).

[3] Flügel.

[4] Fihrist, p. 41.

[5] Chenery in his introduction to Al-Hariri has discussed this subject at great length.

as the invention of Grammar, was the introduction of the diacritical points by Hajjaj.[1]

However scanty and admittedly unreliable the information regarding the intellectual efforts of the Arabs in the first century of the Hegira, one thing is clear. Great then was the intellectual stir and rapid the growth of a special culture which was peculiarly their own. Yet the credit for all this belongs, to a large extent, to the converted foreigners of Aramaic and Persian nationalities. Doubtful, more or less, is the information handed down to us regarding the literary achievements of those times. Thus we are told that the Omayyad prince, Khalid Ibn Yazid, busied himself with alchemy, and the old story-teller, Abid Ibn Sharja, who regaled the court of Baghdad with his tales, left behind his collected works. But all this rests on insecure foundation.

We find ourselves on surer ground from the second century of the Hegira, when intellectual activities began on a far grander scale. It is no mere accident that this movement synchronises with the growth of large towns and the rise of a settled Arab population.

The dogmatic and theological controversies must first engage our attention. The soil on which they throve was no longer that of Syria but of the country round the Euphrates. Hither was the seat of the Government transferred, and here arose the keenest intellectual life. One of the oldest centres and meeting-points for this was Basra. In this important commercial town not only lived a thriving population but there also flowed in a stream of foreigners from the remotest countries. Thus, here, arose a lively, stirring intellectual life. The doctrines of the Murjiites and the Qadirites soon made their way into Basra, secured followers, rapidly grew and developed. Here, for the first time, the doctrine of the freedom of the will—born in Damascus—was developed into a proper rationalistic school of Theology.[2] The Arab authors have

[1] Flügel, p. 30.

[2] "In Islam, as in other religions, the fiercest battles have been fought over this very question of predestination or freedom. . . . When Greek philosophy became known to Muslim thinkers under the Abbasid Caliphs, there came into prominence a rationalistic school of theologians called the Mutazalites, that is the seceders. . . . They call themselves *believers in the unity and justice of God.* Their teaching is set forth by Shahrastani (German translation, p. 43, Vol. I) in these words: 'They affirm that man has freedom and that he is the originator of his actions, both good and bad, and that he is therefore a being who

preserved for us a highly charming picture of one of those not rare literary circles of Basra where political and religious questions of the day formed subjects of converse. It was a kind of club of learned and reflective men which met at the house of a member for talk and discussion. On some of these men we possess detailed information. In this connexion the blind Bashshar Ibn Burd deserves first place. He descended from an old Persian family, alleged to be of royal blood. His father was brought as a slave by a victorious Arab General to Iraq where Bashshar was born. He was finally given his freedom by his mistress, a noble Arab lady, and he became her client. He lived in Basra, but he made several journeys to Baghdad to the court of the Caliph. He early showed his poetical talents, and soon acquired great renown.[1] He seems to have always cherished, in silence, the faith of his ancestors and, in one of his poems, he actually glorifies the old Persian fire-worship. The second of this group was Amr Ibn Ubaid. He, too, was of foreign descent, for his grandfather was taken prisoner in Kabul, and was brought to Basra. Although he stood in high favour with the Caliph Mansur, he declined to accept any presents from him, and always maintained the fullest freedom of judgment. The third of this distinguished group was Wasil Ibn Ata [2]—founder of the rationalistic school in Islam. Manifold were the intellectual activities of this band of thinkers. One accepted the doctrines of Buddhism. Bashshar remained a doubter all his life. Amr accepted the views of Wasil, which turned mainly on two chief theological questions, which may be summed up in the words: free-will (Qadr) and faith (Iman). On the question of predestination or free-will Wasil apparently followed the lead of his master—the great moralist Hasan Basri. According to Hasan, man has free

deserves reward and punishment in the next world for what he has done. But [they affirm] God cannot be brought into connexion with evil and unrighteousness and unbelief and disobedience [as their cause]. For as He is righteous when He brings forth righteousness, so He would be unrighteous if He were the cause of unrighteousness, so far the Mutazalites. Their opponents took their stand (Shahrastani, pp. 92, 102) on the divine omnipotence and did not shrink from the conclusion that man has no power over his own acts. Although the school which finally prevailed tried to mediate, its members rescued for man only the semblance of freedom. The accepted Muslim theology is undoubtedly deterministic." *Smith, Bible and Islam* (Ely Lecture for 1897), pp. 136–137.

[1] He was blind from birth.

[2] Ibn Khallikan, Vol. III, p. 642.

decision over, and therefore full responsibility for, his acts. On the question of faith (Iman) he took a fresh path, and parted from his master. In opposition to the Kharijites, who held that a Muslim guilty of a grave sin should be regarded as unfaithful and apostate from Islam, he taught that such a one should hold a position midway between Islam and unbelief, and should be set down as neither faithful nor unfaithful. He also denied the attributes by which the orthodox sought to adorn God.[1] Amr represented these views. With his moral purity and intellectual greatness, he reminds us of the sages of Grecian antiquity. He shared the ascetic austerities of his master, and compared this life to a journey through the desert, where, at a halting-place, we pitch a tent, to rest awhile, and then proceed further and further, and on and on. Deeply grieved at the shameful reign of Walid II, he took a prominent part in the political activities of the time. He supported and worked for Yazid III when he rose against Walid, and succeeded in dethroning him.

After the fall of the Omayyads, Amr was honoured by the second Abbasid Caliph Mansur, and when, on the return journey from Mekka, he died, the Caliph mourned his death in a poem.

It is curious that this very prince who, by his connection with one of the purest and noblest men of his time, makes us forget many a dark spot in his career, encouraged a literary movement of far-reaching results. At his instance, we are informed, books from foreign languages, were, for the first time, translated into Arabic, from Sanskrit,—*Kalila wa Dimnah*, the famous collection of Indian stories; *Sidhanta* (Arabic *Sidhind*), the principal Indian work on Astronomy; from Greek, several books of Aristotle; the *Almagest* of Ptolemy; the Book of Euclid. Besides these notable works—many other old Greek, Byzantine, Persian and Syriac books were translated as well.

The old historian who records this adds: As soon as these books became accessible they were read and studied with eager and breathless enthusiasm.[2]

The appearance of these men, and the new ideas called into being by them, marks a turning-point in the intellectual life of the Muslims. For who can doubt that there was a close and

[1] Shahrastani, I, 48. [2] Masudi, VIII, 291.

intimate connection between the activities of the learned clubs of Basra, the teachings of a Wasil or Amr Ibn Ubaid and the popularizing of Greek, Syriac and Persian learning—favoured and patronized by the Court? The new school of thought founded by these two men of outstanding distinction gave a philosophic direction to theological and dogmatic discussions. The Mutazalites became, in opposition to the party of narrow orthodoxy, the party of light and culture. Despite the older sects, they henceforward became the leaders of spiritual movements, the champions of unbending moral principles, and the upholders of the doctrine of the freedom of the will against the orthodox doctrine of fatalism. The views regarding God and Revelation were, indeed, the two contentious matters that stood out in bold relief. The Mutazalites sought to strip the divine conception of all anthropomorphic colourings, and to treat it abstractedly as the essence of goodness. As simple and forcible were their views regarding the Qur'an. They rejected the orthodox belief that it was 'uncreated' and 'eternal.' They looked upon it simply as a book, like any other, save and except that it contained divine inspirations and divine injunctions revealed to mankind through the prophet Mohamed. These new teachings stirred Muslim society to its depths. The orthodox—of various shades of opinion—opposed them, and fought them with fierce bitterness. In Persia, where the rationalistic doctrines made headway, they accepted the Mutazalite conception of God, but attacked their doctrine of free-will (Jabariyyah, Jahamiyyah, Najariyyah sects).[1]

These theologico-philosophical controversies provoked a keen intellectual contest, which continued well nigh for a couple of centuries, and marked the highest point of Arab civilization. Notable is the growth of an extensive polemical literature dealing with the many interesting questions of the day. Jahidh, one of the most prolific of philosophers and publicists of that age, has bequeathed to us quite a number of small treatises dealing with current prominent problems. We find, among them, one in which he compares the North-Arabians with the South-Arabians, and defends the former; in another he discusses the position of the clients as against the genuine Arabs, and undisguisedly expresses himself

[1] From the third to the fifth centuries of the Hegira.

in favour of the clients; in yet another he discusses the position of the Arabs in relation to the Persians.[1]

Along with these political and social questions we notice the growth of a polemical literature of still greater range and compass, dealing with the various aspects of the different sects. But, soon, indeed, other fields attracted their attention and claimed their activities.[2]

In the way of historical works very little has come down to us from the early days of Islam.[3] The first thing that the Muslims did was to collect oral traditions, which had grown tremendously in bulk and variety. Their very immensity called for arrangement and classification, and to this task the Muslims addressed themselves.

[1] Jahiz, *Kitab-ul-Haiwan*, Fol. I.

[2] "However much economic development was impeded by the constant tumult and rebellions caused by the various sects, their existence was nevertheless of the greatest advantage to intellectual progress, owing to the large degree of tolerance which the Caliph was obliged to exhibit on their account. Every new idea, however daring it might be, could hope to find approbation and adherents, not only among the well-educated higher classes of Baghdad, but even among the people and at court. Doubters and sceptics were permitted publicly to expound their views side by side with the unyielding orthodox and the fanciful mystics; and the numerous Christians and Jews took an active part in the labour of civilisation, according to their own methods. In most cases, however, the various sects and religions were nothing more than the intellectual expression of the differences of races, which indeed were the true foundation of the rapid development of Irakian civilization. The characteristics of the different people who came together in Baghdad supplemented each other in a marvellous way, the sharp somewhat matter-of-fact intellect of the Arabs became united at a most favourable moment with the unbridled creative imagination of the Iranian, and conceptions of the harmony of early Greek life as well as of the mystic depths of Hindoo thought were awakened by the representatives of these two opposite poles of Aryan culture." See Helmholt's *World's History*, Vol. III, pp. 334–335.

[3] *Die Orientalischen Literaturen* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1906), p. 150. Prof. De Goeje speaks of *Ibn Uqba's Life of the Prophet* and *Abu Mikhnaf's Monograph on Important Events* from the time of Abu Bakr to that of Walid II, as the oldest historical works known to us. All that we know of them is from the extracts which later writers have made and used in their works. These two works belong to the last days of the Omayyads. Ibn Ishaq belongs to the age of the Abbasids. Waqidi comes next. His chief merit lies in his minute study of the traditionists and in chronological details. His work was continued by his disciple *Ibn Saad*. Madaini, younger than Waqidi, wrote a history of the Caliphs. He was specially conversant with the history of the Eastern Lands of the Caliphate. Tabari has used him as his main source for this part of his history. *Saif Ibn Omar* has written a history of the apostacy of the Arabs under Abu Bakr, and has also described the great conquests. But he must be used with caution.

The oldest historical work—belonging to the second phase of Muslim activity—is the chronologically arranged collection of traditions relating to the life of the Prophet. Its author, Ibn Ishaq[1] (d. 151 A.H.; 767 A.D.), composed it at the instance of the Caliph Mansur. The original is lost. The book, however, that has come down to us is the one that passed through the hands of Ibn Hisham (d. 206 A.H.), who, without interfering with the text, has left it enriched with his own critical and philological notes.[2]

What strikes us most in the oldest historical works of the Arabs is their enthusiasm and their overpowering conviction of the importance of their endeavour. Nor can we fail to notice their inexhaustible industry in collecting information from most diverse sources and weaving it into one complete chaplet. Every statement is traced back to its ultimate source, and every link in the long chain of narrators is carefully set forth. All this indubitably attests zealous research. Yet these achievements do not constitute finished historical works, such as we understand history to be; for nowhere do we find in them that characteristic stamp of the historian—the summing-up and the verdict.[3]

Ibn Hisham died about 50 years after the death of the author, but in the handling of his material he shows a distinct advance upon the latter. Though he leaves the text uninterfered with, he yet collects the varying traditions, reveals critical insight, shows an inclination to test the sources from which the information comes, and expresses his opinion on their authenticity or otherwise. He devotes special attention

[1] Abdullah Mohamed Ibn Ishaq bin Yasar, a freedman of Kais b. Makharama b. al-Muttalib, acquired at Medina a very thorough knowledge of the life of the Prophet. On account of the hostility, nay the positive ill-treatment, which he received in Medina, he left the town in A.H. 115, and after a long residence in Egypt (where, especially in Alexandria, he studied and taught) he came to Kufa, visited Al-Rai, met in Hira the Caliph Al-Mansur, who induced him to collect traditions relating to the life of the Prophet and to spend the evening of his life at Baghdad. He died at Baghdad in 151 A.H. His credibility is questioned by some, but purely out of party-spirit. The utmost that can be urged against him is that he is not always very discriminating in dealing with genealogies. He had a pronounced leaning towards the doctrines of the Qadirites. *Wüstenfeld, Die Geschichtschreiber der Araber*, p. 8.

[2] Masudi, VIII, p. 291.

[3] See Prof. York-Powell on 'History, Historians and the Teaching of History,' Vol. II, pp. 1–13. Bossier's *Tacitus*, pp. 44 et sqq. and pp. 82–86.

to ancient poetry. He singles out interpolated verses. He explains out-of-the-way expressions, words, phrases, and treats the entire subject from the standpoint of a trained philologist.

A historian, almost as old as Ibn Ishaq, is Waqidi. A freedman, he sought fame and distinction through literary activities. And stupendous was his literary and historical output. He gathered together an immense [1] collection of biographical and historical material on the history of Islam right up to his own time. In the *History of the Companions of the Prophet*, he shows a notable advance upon his forerunners, in the handling of his materials. He does not indiscriminately marshal his facts, drawn from most diverse sources, but works them up into an independent narrative in his own words. Thus his work gives us the impression of a connected, coherent historical work, rippling with sunny humour, resplendent with a lively style. While the old historians confine themselves to subjects dearest to them—namely, the history of the Prophet and the rise of Islam—changed conditions evoked other interests. By large conquests and contact with foreigners historical vision was widened. In important towns, especially in Baghdad and Basra, the increase of wealth and prosperity stirred the passion for knowledge. Apart from the hitherto traditional subjects of study, such as tradition, theology, jurisprudence, other subjects now

[1] Al-Waqidi was born in the beginning of the year 130 A.H. at Medina where he carried on the business of a corndealer. He was deeply versed in Muslim history, but his authority in matters religious is not accepted by the orthodox, because of his Shi'ite tendencies. He was exceedingly generous. On charitable purposes he lavishly spent the money he made in his trade. The result was that he got heavily involved in debt. He therefore decided to go to Baghdad and seek help there. He proceeded to the Wazir Yahya b. Khalid-al-Barmaki, who accorded him a very warm welcome. After several visits, at each of which he received rich presents, the Wazir requested him to stay permanently with him. Waqidi accepted the offer, on condition that he was allowed first to settle his affairs at Medina. The Wazir gave him a house and 200,000 dinars. He utilized half of this amount in discharging his debts at Medina. On his return to Baghdad he was appointed *Kadhi* of the portion of the town on the western side of the Tigris. He loved and purchased books, and kept two slaves to copy books for him. He left behind a collection in 600 chests—each of which required two men to lift it. The Caliph Mamun transferred him from the western to the eastern side of the Tigris, called Askar-al-Mahdi, or Rusafa, where he died on the 11th of Zil Hijja 207 A.H. (823 A.D.). *Kitabul-Fihrist* (p. 99) states that Waqidi wrote twenty-eight books. Only a few have come down to us. I have in my possession his *Kitabul-Maghazi*, which was used by Sir William Muir, and which bears his extensive marginal notes.

claimed men's interest and provoked their curiosity. In the mosques, which were then the centres for exchange of ideas, people discussed politics; they talked about foreign communities; they learnt the names of the old Persian kings and the Byzantine Caesars; they heard of Arabian antiquity and its legendary Kais and heroes. Nor was genealogy excluded from these discussions, for the descent of an individual tribe or a family was a matter of practical moment determining their position and fixing their rank.

Thus the circle of historical activities ever widened. Men sought to explore the hitherto unknown spheres of knowledge and to make that knowledge popular. A new kind of historical literature, namely, the *Universal Compendiums*, was the result, wherein all that a cultured man needed to know was set down; for an old author says: "it often happens that in an assembly mention is made of a prophet, or of a king, or of a learned man, or of some genealogical questions, or of a historical event, or of the day of a battle; every one present then needs information regarding the event, the tribe, the reign of the ruler, the life of the man, or the history of a proverb of which mention has been made. I have myself seen men of noble descent who knew nothing of their origin, who could not mention the names of their own ancestors; even noble Mekkans have I seen who were unable to give any information concerning their relationship with the Prophet or his honoured companions. I have also known people belonging to a family without knowing to which sub-division of a tribe the family belonged. So also have I known a family belonging to a sub-division of a tribe, without knowing which was the main tribe. Also have I known a man who, in seeking to escape the reproach of obscurity of descent, named as his ancestor one who had died childless." [1]

To meet such needs they prepared comprehensive handbooks for general use. Such a work is the *Kitab-ul-Ma'arif* (Book of Knowledge) of Ibn Kutaiba (about 276 A.H., 889 A.D.). This methodical, novel piece of work marks a considerable advance, for it is short and compact, and is written to be committed to memory. The book [2] begins with the Creation, and the author cites biblical passages

[1] Ibn Kutaiba, *Kitab-ul-Ma'arif*, p. 3.
[2] Ibn Kutaiba, pp. 6–8.

referring to it in literal translation; so also with the section regarding the creation of man and his fall. Then follows the history of the patriarchs according to biblical and Arab legends. For the latter he uses the highly doubtful Wahb Ibn Munabbih, whose lying tales provoke an observation which clearly shows that the author feels called upon to judge between contradictory reports.[1] He then deals with those old Arabs who had renounced pre-Islamic heathenism.[2] This is followed by a lengthy section on the genealogy of the Arab tribes—supplemented by biographies of the Prophet, his kinsmen, his adherents, and finally the Caliphs up to the time of the author. The next section contains an account of persons who are famous in the history of Islam, and sundry notices. The book concludes with a history of the South Arabian dynasties before Islam and of the Persian kings. What has been said suffices to show the great change that had come over the conception of historical literature. The old traditional view is, to a great extent, set aside, and the intellectual vision is considerably widened. The history of the Prophet forms now only a part of the whole; non-Muslim nations claim attention; and translations from Hebrew, Persian and other foreign languages are made use of. From a different angle of vision history is now treated. Even the tendency to look at the events of the past *not* merely from a religious point of view, gains ground and extends more and more. At the Muslim Court itself the real annals—in which the reign of every prince is minutely described—come into vogue. We are told that, under the Caliph Mutamid, such a record was once sent for to ascertain whether any of the former rulers had been as generous as he in making a present of a thousand pieces of pretty stuff to a favourite female singer. The informant adds that the Court lackeys brought in the *Annals of the Empire*: they were large folio volumes.[3]

The passion for history increased more and more, and foreign non-Muslim peoples were not ruled out of consideration. This is the characteristic feature of the new times. History brought in its train archaeology, geography, ethnography. The example set by great towns, especially Baghdad, stimulated such intellectual efforts.

[1] Ibn Kutaiba, p. 28. [2] Ibn Khallikan, Vol. II, p. 22.
[3] Aghani, XIV, p. 114.

Thus a writer of that age—Beladhuri, d. 279 A.H. (892 A.D.) —who was educated and brought up in Baghdad, where he enjoyed the special favours of the Caliph Mutawakkil, wrote a history of the Muslim conquests which, conspicuous by an absence of pedantry, not only exhibits excellence of method, but shows, throughout, tact and the tastes of a cultivated mind—accustomed to the best society—and freedom from the bondage of the school of the traditionists.

The tendency of the times, to be interested in the history of antiquity and of foreign non-Muslim peoples, is a tendency which can only manifest itself in a very advanced stage of civilization. A striking illustration of this is found in the voluminous works of a South-Arabian—a scion of one of the noblest families of Yaman. He set himself the task of writing the ancient history of his native land, of its tribes, and of the noble ruins that lay scattered there, and of explaining their inscriptions, as also of portraying its ethnographical and geographical conditions. This was Hamadani (d. 334 A.H.; 945-6 A.D.). He relied for information on another South-Arabian, Abu Nasr Hirry, a genuine Himyarite, who was intimately acquainted with the legends and traditions of his people, and who, apparently, could even read the old Sabian inscriptions. In Hamadani we find these in transliteration and translation.[1]

For a long time it was believed that this work was lost, but my conjecture, hazarded to the contrary years ago, turned out true. On the attention of Captain Miles, English Resident at Maskat, being drawn to the Himyarite Qasidah edited by me,[2] he instituted enquiries, and found two fragments: one the eighth and the other the tenth volume of this book. The contents of the entire work in ten volumes are as follows: (1) Primitive history and the beginnings of genealogy; (2) Genealogy of the descendants of Humaisa; (3) The merits of the Kahtanides; (4) Ancient History up to the time of King Tubba Abu Karib; (5) Middle period, from the beginning of the rule of Asad Tubba to Dhu Nawas; (6) Later period, up to the time of Islam; (7) The old sagas and legends; (8) The castles of Yaman and their inscriptions, the mourning songs of the Himyarites, and the inscriptions on the graves; (9) The proverbs of the Himyarites and their wise maxims

[1] *Cf.* Himyarite Qasidah, V.
[2] Von Kremer: *Ueber die Südarabische Sage*, p. 140.

in the Himyarite language, the *Musnad* inscriptions, etc.; (10) On Hâshid and Bakil.

It is clear from this that the work was not merely a historical work but embraced within its compass topography, antiquity, etc., etc. Thus, in the eighth book, we find a complete Sabaic alphabet, with Arabic transcription. Besides this, Hamadani has left a topography of Arabia, which, according to Sprenger, is the best book on the subject.[1]

Shortly afterwards, an author, apparently of Persian descent, supplied a *Chronological Compendium* of great importance, in which he bestowed special attention on the old history of Persia and on the chronological adjustment between the Mohamedan and the old Persian eras, and recounted the history of the Caliphate up to the year 350 A.H. This is Hamza of Ispahan. His book is typical of its kind, and simply states facts without naming his authorities. We see already the firm footing of the new school of history. In addition to what has already been said, we recall two other authors of note who are real pioneers in the realm of historical activity—Masudi (d. 354 A.H.; 956 A.D.) and Beruni (d. 430 A.H.; 1038-9 A.D.). Masudi was born at Baghdad, but was of North Arabian descent. In his early youth he took to travels, and visited the major portion of the Islamic world. He first went to India, visited Multan and Mansura; passed on from there to Persia and Kirman, and returned once again to India. He resided a long time at Cambaye (Kanbaja) and Saimur; went to Ceylon; and thence set sail for Yaman. Perhaps he even went to Further India and China. After these extensive travels he resided in several provinces of the Caliphate. Thus he stayed for some time in Tiberias, in Antioch, and on the Syrian frontier, then at Basra, where for the first time he redacted his work which has come down to us; *Muruj-ul-Dhahab*. Later he went to Egypt, resided at Fustat (Al-Cairo), where he redacted his last work *Kitab-ul-Tanbih*, and soon afterwards passed away. His chief work—*Mir'at-ul-Zaman* (Mirror of the Time)—has only come down to us in fragments. It must have been of very considerable range. In the work which lies before us in its entirety—"The Golden Meadow"—an abridgement of his greater work—he gives us the treasures of his experience in the lively style

[1] Von Kremer in Z.D.M.G.

of a narrator who has seen many countries, tested life at all points, and delights in not merely instructing but also in entertaining his reader. Without worrying us with the names of his authorities—without entering into long serious discussions —he loves, above everything else, to call attention to the wonderful, rare, striking facts and phenomena of his day, and to sum up men and their age in deftly woven anecdotes.

Throughout he shows the very same lively interest in non-Muslim as in Muslim peoples. We may almost call him the Muslim Herodotus. Certainly his book stands unrivalled in its combination of instruction and amusement.

Very different is the activity of Beruni. Born in the North-West of India, he was, despite his Arab nationality, intimately familiar with the local language. He translated from Sanscrit into Arabic ; accompanied Mahmud, the great conqueror, on his expeditions ; acquired a thorough knowledge of astronomy and geography, which he set down in his *Al Qanun-ul-Masudi.* His statement regarding latitude has been found, by recent calculation, to be correct, except for a minute or two.

He wrote an exhaustive work on Chronology, which is of profound importance for comparative geography, and distinguished himself as a scientist. His work on India is one of the most outstanding features of the older Arab literature.

The statement of Masudi in the Introduction to his " Golden Meadow," that for the purposes of his book, he had read over fifty historical works of different writers, suffices to indicate the range and extent of the literary activity of those times. This activity did not, indeed, relax even when the glory of the Caliphate paled and faded. But *with the beginning of the Buyyid rule, Arab culture definitely enters upon the era of its decline and fall.*[1] And yet we possess some historical works even of that period, which are marked by excellence of presentation and rare insight into the manifold aspects of life.

[1] For instance, Ibn Miskawaih—author of the *Tajarib ul-Umam.* This work has now been published and translated into English by Prof. Margoliouth. " Miskawaih, a convert to Islam from Magianism, as Court Librarian under the Buwahid Sultans, held a position in which he had access to plentiful and accurate information, without being exposed to the devastating fury of those frequent political storms which made shipwreck of the fortunes of more important men than he. His first patron, Muized-Daulah, was Amir-al-Amara (Prince of Princes), during A.D. 946–967 ; his last, the Amir Adud ed-Daulah, died in 983."

In the beginning writers concerned themselves with the history of Islam. They next passed on to universal histories. But we notice sectional works too, and *that* at an early stage. They set to work at general biographies of famous contemporaries, or biographies of a particular class (Tabaqat), as, for instance, of the Companions of the Prophet, of the traditionists, of the jurists, of physicians, poets, even lovers and madmen. They wrote histories of the Wazirs, of individual magnates, and of parties and sects. I will only refer to the history of Religions and Sects—the work of Shahrastani—and to the no less remarkable work of the Spanish wazir, Ibn Hazm.[1] Somewhat later they went further still, and began to deal with the history of particular towns (as, for instance, the History of Baghdad, of Damascus, of Ispahan, of Baihaq, of Naisapur, etc., etc.), and not infreqently wrote books of immense bulk.

No less striking was their activity in the sphere of geography —a subject intimately connected with history. It happened thus. The need was soon felt for geographical knowledge ; for in ancient poems names of places and of tribes were constantly referred to, and, in the traditions, in the history of the campaigns of the Prophet, and of later conquests, geographical proper names were of extreme frequency. The necessity for supplying information on these subjects was felt, and with that end in view geographical registers were composed, with short explanatory notes. With the growth of the Empire of the Caliph it became even a matter of practical importance to know the chief stations, the main high roads, the extent of individual provinces, their towns, rivers and mountains. Thus Ibn Hisham—the historian already referred to—wrote several geographical treatises in explanation of his historical works.[2]

A geographical work of Yaqubi,[3] dating from the year 278 A.H., has come down to us. It shows us that even then

[1] Shahrastani has been edited by Cureton and translated by Haarbrücker in German. A portion of Ibn Hazm, dealing with the Shiahs' has been translated into English by Friedlander and published in America. On Shahrastani, see Barbier de Meynard, *Dict. de la Perse*, p. 359. Ibn Khall. (Du Slane's Text), Vol. I, p. 676.

[2] Hammer-Purgstall, *Litt. Gesch.*, III, 386.

[3] See Brockelmann, Vol. I, p. 226 ; Z.D.M.G., Val.40, pp. 189, 612 ; Vol. 41, p. 415 ; Vol. 42, p. 1. Beazley, *Dawn of Modern Geography*, Vol. I, Ch. VII.

geography was treated systematically. Although its tendency is pre-eminently topographical, it contains the division of the provinces, and gives much ancillary information regarding revenue, commerce and industry. The more important towns it describes in detail. Baghdad and Samarra receive so thorough and circumstantial a treatment that, if time had not completely effaced the traces of those ancient days, we would have been able to reconstruct an exact plan of these towns, with their network of streets, bazaars and different quarters, just as they then stood. This work is not merely a transcript from earlier books, but is based, in large measure, on the author's own observations and experiences. The style is clear, simple, chaste, and conveys the impression of perfect reality.

The importance attached to geographical studies is best shown by the fact that high officers of Government prepared handbooks for official use, in which the lands of the Caliphate and those bordering on them were described as far as they were then known. Ibn Khurdedbah—whose acquaintance we have already made—is the first author known to us who prepared such an official itinerary, with precise information regarding the stations, postal relays, even the revenue, of each individual province.

Somewhat later Qudama followed, with a practical handbook for the use of the Central Chancery in Baghdad. He, too, dealt very thoroughly with the provinces of the Empire and the organization of the postal department, and gave a general geographical survey, noting, with particular care, the subdivisions of the provinces and the revenue payable by each land-unit. To this he added an account of the neighbouring foreign peoples and their countries. The system of finance, taxation, administrative law, next engaged his attention, and a short account of Muslim conquests, drawn from Beladhuri, concluded the work.

Very sound and complete was the geographical knowledge of Qudama. It is apparent that it rested upon his knowledge of astronomy—the writings of Ptolemy. He knew of the spherical form of the Earth, and of the shortness of the days in polar regions.

By such works as these a craving for knowledge was created and heightened. A minister at the Court of the Samanides (Jaihani, between 279 and 295) composed, under

the inspiration of Qudama, a yet more comprehensive work, which has come down to us in an evidently abridged form.[1]

The desire to see the world, and the curiosity to know foreign countries and peoples, increased more and more. The great ease with which caravans carried travellers through the whole of the world-wide Empire promoted a general interest in books of travel containing descriptions of countries and peoples. This inaugurated a real literature of travels, in which the writer recounted his own experiences, and only described the countries he actually visited, or regarding which he was in a position to get information. In this connexion Hamadani's *Description of Arabia* holds the first place. No less meritorious—though not so thorough or in all respects so accurate—is the work of Istakhri, a geographer regarding whose life details are wanting, but who, probably about 340 A.H. (951–2 A.D.), prepared a new edition of Balkhi (d. 322 A.H., 934 A.D.), in which he tried to correct his maps and considerably to amplify individual sections of his book, notably the section dealing with Persia, which thus grew into a regular monograph by itself, and which contains so complete an account of Persia, at that period, that it may be regarded as the best piece of work done so far. What distinguishes Istakhri is his unfailing survey of trade, commerce, industry, natural products and the ethnographical conditions of the country under consideration.

Even in maps we notice an improvement, for an old writer, who wrote about the end of the Xth century A.D., tells us of having seen a large map of the world on a canvas.[2] The keenness of interest in geographical literature is best revealed by a new edition of Istakhri, prepared by Ibn Haukal.[3] To qualify himself for the task he travelled for twenty-eight years, carrying with him the works of his precursors—Ibn Khurdedbah, Qudama and Jaihani.

But Maqdasi, who wrote in A.H. 375 (985-6 A.D.), overshadowed them all. Here I follow Sprenger, to whom belongs the credit of having first called our attention to his book. There is no geographer, according to him, who travelled so widely, observed so acutely, and collected and used his

[1] Sprenger, *Postrouten*, XVII.
[2] Fihrist, 285.
[3] He lived about, 366 A.H. = 976–7 A.D.

materials so well according to plan, as did Maqdasi. True, as a traveller he is surpassed by others—for instance, Ibn Batuta—who covered a greater distance than he; but no one who has left his experiences behind in writing travelled so thoroughly in Muslim countries, or resided in important places longer than he did—studying the life and the characteristics of the people. He did not, indeed, go so far as Sind or Spain, but wherever he did go he mixed with all classes, and noted all that was of interest or of instruction for mankind.

Let us hear what he has himself to say. In his introduction he observes: "My book consists of three parts; the first what I have seen; the second what I have heard from credible people; and the third what I have found in books. No library, great or small, have I left unused—no theological tendency have I omitted to probe—no pious man have I failed to associate with, and no preacher have I neglected to listen to, until I learnt all I had come to learn. Many names have I borne, such as: Maqdisi (*i.e.*, one from Jerusalem), Palestinian, Egyptian, Maghribian, Khorasanian, reader of Qur'an, doctor (Faqih), sufi, saint, hermit, pilgrim, scribe, book-binder, merchant, moralist, leader, *muazzin*, preacher, foreigner, Iraqian, Baghdadian, Syrian, Hanafite, literary man, theological student, apprentice, authority on the law of succession, master, wise-man, *shaikh*, horseman, envoy, and all this because so many lands I visited and at so many places I took up my abode. There is no experience of a traveller that I have not endured, save that of a beggar's trade, or the commission of a deadly sin. I have been a jurist, and I have played the part of a man of letters. I have lectured on theology and philology. I have preached, and I have called the pious to prayer from the minaret of a mosque. I have led the faithful in prayer, and I have delivered lectures at madrassahs. I have dined with Sufis—shared the humble repast of the monk—enjoyed the sailor's fare. I was even once ejected from a mosque, one evening, to roam aimlessly in the desert. Solitude too have I known; and forbidden food—against my better judgment—have I tasted. I have associated with the hermits of Lebanon —I have lived at the courts of princes. At times, I have owned slaves—at others, as a pedlar, I have carried a basket on my head. Often have I been on the point of being drowned, and not infrequently has my caravan been plundered. I have made calls on judges and magistrates. Mighty princes and

ministers have given me a hearing, and then again have I joined a robber's band or sat in the market as a petty trader. From galleys I have watched the Byzantine naval warfare and, of nights, have I heard the chime of Christian bells. I have even once carried on the trade of a book-binder, and yet again I have paid for a drink of water with a silver coin. In a palanquin I have sat, and a horse have I ridden through heat and snow. With distinguished folk I have waited in the porch of princes, and yet again humbly sat among the populace in the weaver's bazaar. Much honour and consideration have fallen to my lot! But, as against this stroke of felicity, more than once my life has been in danger. I have performed the pilgrimage to the holy towns; taken part in campaigns in enemy country; have helped in the defence of frontiers. In Mekka I have drunk barley-water, and in the market eaten peas. Like Abraham, I have enjoyed both the hospitality in Hebron and the figs in Ascalon—which any one may pluck. From princes I have received presents and robes of honour; but poverty and destitution, too, have I known. Great men have corresponded with me, and have sought my counsel but reproaches and abuses I have not been spared; and when suspected of heresy or of questionable action, I have had to demean myself by taking an oath. Amirs and Kadhis have appointed me their plenipotentiary, and in more than one will I have been appointed executor. The tricks of the broker and of the robber I have come to know. Poor men have sought me, but the envious laid traps for me and made complaints against me to the authorities. The hot baths in Tiberias and the castles in Persia I have visited. I have taken part in the *feast of the fountain*, as also at the *Barbara-festival* at Antioch. I have examined the spring water of Bir Bida'ah and the Castle of Kasr Yqaub. I have been present at the feast of Mihrjan and that of the Holy Land, and also at the Celebration of the New Year at Aden (the feast of the Holy Sergius). And so I may go on and on; but enough has been said to show that my book is the fruit of experience, and is distinguished from those that are based on hearsay. While travelling I have paid out more than 10,000 dirhams as compensation for repeated neglect of divine serivce, and have been compelled to avail myself of all the indulgences allowed by the various sects. Never, on the great Caravan road, when between me and the approaching town lay a distance of

10 *parasangs* or less, did I fail to leave the caravan and hasten to survey the town. For this purpose I have often employed guides, and have travelled through the night to enable me to join my fellow-travellers—all this involving much expense and trouble."

Maqdasi is not free from vanity, but what he says of his book is not an empty boast. He made two journeys, and took endless pains to ascertain facts and acquaint himself with the truth. After his first journey he wrote his book (985 A.D.), but, after the second, he prepared a fresh and enlarged edition.

In his work he develops original and notable ideas. The fact that, for the most part, Muslim territory resembles a number of oases separated from each other by desert or steppes, seems to have induced him to lay special stress upon the classification of the Muslim countries. He wished to avoid lumping together tracts with entirely different physiognomies. He adopts the principle that a country may be likened to an army. According to him villages correspond to common soldiers—country towns, which are the centres of the civilization of several villages, to subordinate officers—provincial chief towns to generals—and metropolitan towns to field marshals—for in them are concentrated the differing civilizations of the provinces.

Maqdasi is the last author who has described the whole of the Muslim Empire, and who deserves the name of a great geographer. Cramped by the narrow spirit of Arab philology, Yaqut and Abul Feda are mere learned compilers who lay more stress upon words and rely more upon book-reading than upon their own experiences and observations. True, quantitatively, geographical activities continued for long, but without the originality of earlier days.

As a last instance of an Arab savant who devotes his whole life to letters, and, at the same time travels over the whole of the Muslim Empire, Yaqut deserves honorable mention. The travelling savant is a characteristic feature of oriental civilization, and we should not omit to note it.

Yaqut was a Greek by birth (b. about 574 A.H.; 1178-9 A.D.). A prisoner of war as a boy, he came, as such, to Baghdad, where he was purchased by a merchant, under whom he received an excellent business training. Scarcely fourteen, he accompanied his master in his extensive travels, and by

590 A.H. (1194 A.D.) he had thrice visited the island of Kish on the Persian Gulf. But at Baghdad he passed his youth and manhood until 610 A.H. (1213 A.D.).

Twenty years before—590 A.H.—he had had a quarrel with his master, and, following a natural bent, sought to earn his living by transcribing books, and at the same time, zealously devoting himself to studies—particularly grammar and tradition. In the year 596 A.H. he was reconciled to his earlier master, and made a fourth journey to Kish. On his return he found that his master had died. He then started an independent business of his own as a book-seller, and also entered upon the career of an author.

From the year 610 A.H. his travels began on a grand scale—at first from Baghdad to Tabriz and, then, through Mosul to Syria and Egypt. Here he continued his literary studies. In 612 A.H. he proceeded to Damascus, but his stay there was cut short by reason of a religious controversy. Via Aleppo he went to Irbyl, and thence to Urmiya and Tabriz. From there he moved on to Khorasan, and was so charmed with Naisabur (Nishabur) that he decided to stay there some time (613 A.H.). He purchased a young Turkish slave-girl, of whom he says that God created none so beautiful. But his means were insufficient, and, to his lasting regret, he had to part with that charming slave-girl. From Naisabur he traversed Sarrakhs, Herat, and Merv. He found there a friendly reception. The inhabitants loved to help poor scholars; and more—here he found full satisfaction for his literary tastes—for in the town he came across no less than ten libraries. Two of these collections were in the great mosque. Of these one, the 'Aziziya', consisting of 12,000 volumes, was named after its founder—the wealthy wine-merchant of Sultan Sunjar. The other eight were located in different colleges (madrassahs). In the use of the books the curators were so liberal that they constantly allowed our traveller to take away to his rooms two hundred volumes at a time, although many a book was worth more than 200 dinars. Amidst these literary treasures he lived and had his fill, during a three years' stay, forgetting even his beautiful Turkish slave-girl. Here he gathered the largest portion of his material for his great geographical dictionary. He then made an incursion into Badghys (616 A.H.); returned to Merv, and thereupon proceeded northward

to see Khwarizm (Khiva), still unvisited by him. He made the return journey up the Oxus, and went first to Balkh, where he did not stay long, for the news of the threatening invasion of the Mogols was everywhere causing dreadful panic. Apparently he intended to return to Merv once again, to collect his belongings there, but he got only as far as Shobarkan, for the news of the advance of the Mogols, who in the very same year (617 A.H.) conquered Samarqand, induced him to take the shortest route to Khorasan.

Across Shahristan, Samalkan, and Bistam, he went to Ra'y, which he found, for the most part, devastated. Thence he bent his steps to Kazwin, and then on to Tabriz, whither he returned seven years after his first visit. He continued his journey from Tabriz to Irbil, and arrived, as a pauper, in Mosul, where he earned a scanty living by copying manuscripts. His friends in Aleppo, whom he informed of his sorrowful plight, sent him money to enable him to go to them (619 A.H.). But soon he returned to Mosul again, to complete his geographical dictionary, which kept him occupied for over two years (620–1 A.H.). Scarcely was this work done when the old passion for travel flamed forth again. He visited Palestine and Egypt afresh (624 A.H.)—returned once again to Aleppo (625 A.H.), where he began to make a fair copy of his geographical dictionary for his great patron, the Wazir of Aleppo.

But in the following year, death overtook him, in an inn outside the town, just as he was on the point of starting for another touring expedition (according to Wüstenfeld, Z.D.M.G., xviii, 397 sqq.).

I know of nothing which brings home to us a picture of the Muslim zeal for truth more clearly and emphatically than an account of the travels of this last great Arab geographer. The Mogol menace, which was to destroy the throne of the Abbasids and the old Baghdad, begins its steady forward course, but it does not, in the slightest degree, interfere with the quiet work of our author in the libraries of Merv. In his flight he saves the greatest portion of his gathered materials, and though hardly at leisure or in peace, he sets to work to complete his task before he embarks on his last journey—never to return.

Of such travel-loving scholars Arabic literature furnishes

an endless list. To this passion for travel the pilgrimage to Mekka supplied the first incentive. The search for traditions occasioned the earliest travels in the pursuit of knowledge—later, other branches of learning followed suit.[1] It was a practice, which continued to later times, to deliver literary and scientific instructions orally. It was not enough to study the book of a renowned author—but, according to Arab view, one must actually hear the author personally deliver the lectures, or study the book under his direct supervision, for thus only was a kind of proof of study established. On this great value was set, as it entitled the holder to deliver independent lectures on the book so studied.

Great is the number of these learned travellers, and Makkari, in his *Spanish History under the Moors*, has a special chapter dealing with the travellers who, in quest of learning, travelled far East, facing all danger and evading no trouble. Such travels were regarded as God-pleasing work—nay a religious duty. A saying of the Prophet is quoted—"He who leaves his home in search of knowledge walks in the path of God until his return home." Another saying runs thus, "God makes easy the path of paradise to him who makes a journey for the sake of knowledge." Stories are related of the pious who, in the beginning of Islam, travelled for months to secure a new tradition or even a variant of one such tradition.[2] Apart from commercial reasons, other motives, later, heightened this passion for travel. Along with the holy places—Mekka and Medina—which the Muslims were enjoined to visit, early indeed, was the visit to the mosque of Jerusalem recommended. And, with the rise of Saint-worship, the number of places for pilgrimage—true, of a lower plane—endlessly multiplied. For people of culture libraries, educational institutions, professors of far-flung fame exercised a powerful magnetic influence. Every student, who aimed at a high place at home, must needs hear lectures at the great mosques of Mekka, Baghdad, Damascus, Cairo, or other centres of literary and religious life.

[1] It was not uncommon for the pilgrims, in their journey from home to Mekka, to keep careful diaries, and, on their return home, to make books out of such diaries, containing their experiences and descriptions of the countries and towns visited. Such a work is the book of Ibn Jubair—a Spanish traveller from Granada.

[2] Ihya, II, 283.

In the beginning it was specially for tradition, exegesis, law, and theology that they made extensive journeys. Later, other branches of learning, too, inspired in the disciples an enthusiasm quite as great as that inspired by the subjects mentioned. This was specially the case with philological studies, because of their close connexion with the branches of religious learning. To study the Arabic language in its perfect purity; to collect the old popular songs and proverbs, philologers lived among the Beduins.

Azhari, whose caravan was attacked and plundered on its way through the desert, regarded his captivity and stay, for some time, among the Beduins, as a piece of sheer good luck. Even from remote India came such lovers of learning, and, with entire justice, a keen observer of Arab life says that this craving for travel was of the highest significance for the diffusion of Arab culture. As the prevailing language of all literary and scientific lectures was Arabic, hail he whence he might, in the vast empire of Islam a new-comer was perfectly at home in a mosque or a lecture-room. Language was never a bar or hindrance to him. Thus the constant influx of travellers; of men eager to learn and to see; of the wise and the ambitious—introduced into the intellectual life of the people a great variety and multifariousness. With the good or evil report of the lecturers the travellers carried far away also their opinions and views. Thus not merely copies of new works but also new thoughts and ideas rapidly made their way all over the Islamic Empire. Through the study of Greek philosophy—carried on with ardent zeal at Baghdad in the ninth and tenth centuries—all this stir and ferment soon affected and leavened the masses.

Kushairi reports how, in Eastern Khorasan, the first messenger of the new ideas was greeted, and how Mekka received the news from a much-travelled scholar (who had rejected the commonly cherished anthropomorphic conceptions of the Deity) of the rise of a new school of religious science at Baghdad.[1]

It is clear from what has been said that the knowledge which gained most from these travels was geographical knowledge.

[1] Haneberg: *Das schul-und Lehrwesen der mohammedaner*, p. 16.

In intimate connexion with the growth of geographical knowledge stand mathematical, astronomical and the natural sciences, which attained a high development in the school of Baghdad. With the accession of the Abbasids, great ardour arose in the study of Greek works in the Arabic translations of the Syrian Christians, as also works in Persian and Indian rendered into Arabic by learned Persian and Indian translators. Passion for learning grew more and more, and the old contempt of the Arabs for foreigners was wholly discarded. Astrology—upon which they set great store—led to the study of astronomical and mathematical works, and out of these efforts soon arose a high order of intellectual activity, and a very extended literature of mathematics, natural sciences, and philosophy. It is not our intention to weary the reader with names and titles of books. Our object merely is to indicate the path which intellectual activities took; to survey the essential developments which stand to the credit of the civilization of the then East. The mathematical knowledge of the Arabs rested upon the Elements of Euclid, which, immediately on being translated into Arabic, was enthusiastically studied by them, and on which they made considerable advances. In the IXth century A.D. they borrowed from the Indians their decimal system, numerals and arithmetic.[1]

If not its origin, Algebra certainly owes its development, to the Arabs. They used it for the solution of geometrical problems, by solving cubic equations geometrically.[2]

At the instance of the Caliph Mamun (about 280 A.H.) the mathematician Mahamed Ibn Musa, commonly called Khwarizimy, wrote a short Algebraical treatise which gave the best known and most useful illustrations drawn from every-day problems of life.[3] This treatise first introduced into Europe a knowledge of Algebra. The Latin translation of Khwarizimy served as a manual to the European scholars of the XVIth century, supplying to them knowledge of Algebra earliest in point of time.[4]

[1] Woepcke, in the *Journal Asiatique*, 1863, pp. 27, 234, 442.

[2] Sédillot, *Matériaux pour servir à l'histoire des sciences mathématiques*, p. 367. Also his *Histoire des Arabes*, pp. 259 et sqq., Vol. II

[3] The author himself calls attention to this fact.

[4] *Cf. Kholasat-ul-Hisab* by Baha-al-Din Amali. Trans. by A. Marre, Rome, 1864. Also Ibn Abdullah Mohammed Bin Mursa's *Geometrical part of Algebra*, trans. by Marre, in the *Nouvelles annales des mathématiques*, Oct., 1846.

Khwarizimy's learning, however, did not extend beyond the equation of the second degree; but, later, the Arabs learnt to solve problems of the fourth degree—nay, they advanced even to binomial equations of the fifth and the sixth degree.

In any event, it is a high distinction for the Arabs to have invented a very ingenious system of Algebraical formulæ long before they were thought of in Europe.[1]

No less credit is due to them for their cultivation of Geometry—particularly the development of spherical Trigonometry. Already in the IXth century they were using the sine of the arc instead of the chord of twice the arc. By the introduction of tangents, they somewhat later simplified the representation of the properties of the circle.[2]

In optics they made considerable independent contributions.[3] The optician Al-Hazan (cf. Charles, Roger Bacon, pp. 289 et sqq.) took the correct view regarding the theory of vision; the refraction of light; the position of the image produced by curved mirrors; the centre of a concave mirror; the seeming dimensions of objects; and the apparent increase in size of the sun and moon when near the horizon.

He shows that the refraction of a ray of light increases with the increasing density of the atmosphere. He proves that, as an effect of refraction, the light of the sun reaches us even when the sun has sunk below the horizon. To him also belongs the credit of having approximately determined the height of the layer of air surrounding the Earth.

More important still were the achievements of the Arabs in the domain of Astronomy. At the instance of the Caliph Al-Mamun, the already referred to Khwarizimy undertook the task of preparing an abridged edition of the Indian Astronomical Tables (Siddhanta) which had already been translated by Fazari.[4] About this very time, probably,

[1] Woepcke, *Omer Alkhyyami*, p. 88. *Journal Asiat.*, October, 1853, p. 323; October–November, 1854, p. 351.

[2] Sédillot: *Matériaux*, p. 378. Even in Geometry the Arabs borrowed the essentials from the Indians. This is evidenced by the Arabic word for *Sinus*—Arabic *Gaib*, which corresponds to the Indian *Jiva*. The European word *Sinus* is merely a translation of the corresponding Arabic technical term.

[3] A Spanish mechanic even invented a machine in which he actually flew into the air. Makkari, II, 873.

[4] Fazari was a Jew who was converted to Islam by Mamun. He was his Court-Astronomer and Superintendent of the Observatories. Fihrist, p. 275. On Fazari, Hammer-Purgstall, *Lit. gesch. der Araber*, III, 253.

they began also to study Ptolemy, and, using the materials at hand, made independent advances of their own. Mamun ordered a revision of the astronomical tables of Ptolemy; and the revised tables (its author being Qahya Ibn Abi Mansur) were based upon observations made simultaneously at Damascus and Baghdad. The measurement of one degree of Meridian was also carried out.[1]

The Tables of Ptolemy were corrected; the changes in apogee of the sun were ascertained; obliquity of the ecliptic was determined to be 23° 33′ 55″, and careful observation of the equinoxes enabled them to fix with exactness the length of the year. Eclipses, comets and other heavenly phenomena were observed. Even then they detected spots on the sun.[2]

About this time lived Al-Farghani, the famous astronomer, whose writings in Latin translation were studied in the European Middle Ages, and who under the name of Alfraganus, enjoyed great authority. Even after the brilliant age of Mamun the zeal for these interesting studies did not abate. Especially did the three brothers, Mohamed, Ahmad and Hasan Ibn Shakir, distinguish themselves—a true family of savants. They made observations from their observatory at Baghdad, and fixed the obliquity of the ecliptic at 23° 35′.

With justice does Sédillot say: "What characterized this school of Baghdad from its inception was its scientific spirit. Proceeding from the known to the unknown; taking precise account of the heavenly phenomena; accepting nothing as true which was not confirmed by experience or established by experiment—such were the fundamental principles taught and proclaimed by the then masters of the sciences."

Renowned even in the European Middle Ages, Albategnius (Battany, d. 317 A.H., 929 A.D.) must needs be mentioned here. He made his observations at the Rakka observatory in A.D. 880. Unfortunately his writings have not come down to us in the original text, and the Latin translations are anything but satisfactory.

We should not pass over in silence the family of Amagur. Ali Ibn Amagur and his son Abul Hasan continued their

[1] Cf. Sprengar's *aufsätze im ausland* 1867, on the history of the measurement of the earth in antiquity, NR. 43, 44, 45. The measurement of the Arabs, NR. 50.

[2] Sédillot, Prolég. des tables astronomiques d'Oloug-Beg, Paris, 1847, I, viii-xiii.

observations, with untiring patience, for nearly half-a-century (885–933 A.D.[1]). They followed with great care the courses of the different planets during certain definite periods and noted the differences which manifested themselves in their course in reference to the ephemerides. A contemporary astronomer says: Ali Ibn Amagur, whom we can unhesitatingly trust, assured me that he persistently continued his astronomical observations for three years, and that he always found differences in the position of the planets and the fixed-stars both as regards their longitude and latitude and particularly in their relative position to the ecliptic. He also found that the longitude of the moon, as determined by observation, was less by 16 minutes than that previously found and he added that he could not account for this difference.

The next generation enthusiastically carried on these researches and intellectual activities, which, specially under the Buyyid Sultans, made tremendous strides in Baghdad, for Asad-ud-Dudlah was a great friend and patron of astronomy. During his administration Abdul Rahman Sufi composed his uranography.[2]

But the astronomers Kuhy and Abul Wafa Buzgani eclipsed all their predecessors. They lived in Baghdad under the first Buyyid ruler. Thanks to the passion of this ruler for astronomy they constructed exceedingly costly instruments for astronomical observations. Thus in the year 996 A.D. the obliquity of the ecliptic was observed with a quadrant which had a radius of thirty feet. Another astronomer used for his observations in 992 a sextant with a radius of eighty feet.[3]

The great Abulwafa (born in Buzgan A.H. 328, A.D. 939, and on that account called Buzgani) settled down in Iraq in A.H. 348, 959 A.D., and there carried on scientific activity on a grand scale.[4]

[1] Sédillot, 1, I, xxx vi.

[2] It reflects great credit on the Royal Russian Academy to have caused the publication of an important work of this astronomer. It is his list of the fixed stars: Description des étoiles fixes par Abdalrahman-al-Sufi. French trans., with notes by H. C. F. Schjellerup, St. Petersbourg, 1874. In order to bring home the importance of the publication of such books I call attention to page 25 of this work on the alleged change of colour of Sirius, and the variation of the colour of the star Algol. Sufi died in the year 376 (A.D. 986).

[3] Sédillot, Matériaux, p. 358.

[4] Fihrist, 283, 328.

His *Almagest* contains discoveries of great importance. We find there the formulæ of the tangents and secants which the Arab geometricians used, just as we use them now, in our trignometrical calculations. By the time of Albategnius they had substituted the sine for the chord. A century later, by the introduction of 'tangents', Abulwafa simplified the treatment of the properties of the circle.[1]

According to the researches of Sédillot it even seems that Abulwafa, in his studies of Ptolemy's theory of the moon, discovered, besides the centre-equation and evection, a third inequality which is nothing more or less than the variation determined by Tycho-Brahe six centuries later.[2] Without accepting this statement as absolutely correct, for it has been disputed—though, I think, on insufficient grounds,—so much is beyond doubt, that the school of Baghdad, in the IXth and Xth centuries, enriched Greek astronomy with new discoveries, and with an unbroken series of observations, carried on for nearly two centuries,—supplying rich materials for a revision and enlargement of knowledge regarding heavenly phenomena. Despite distracting political revolutions, astronomy, in later times, found ardent students—though Baghdad ceased to maintain its primacy in this sphere of activity. Of later astronomers we need only mention Nasir-uddin Tusi, who established an observatory in Maragha,[3] and Olugh Beg, the last great astronomer of the oriental Middle Ages, who founded an observatory at Samarqand.

Even in the 10th century the school of Cairo stood out as a rival to the school of Baghdad. A disciple of the great Abul-

[1] Sédillot, Prolég. LIX.

[2] In such things how necessary it is to be cautious, the following observation shows. In the treatise of the "Brethren of Purity" occurs a passage in reference to the oscillation of the Polar axis. It runs according to Dieterici (*Die Lehre von der Weltseele*, Leipzig, 1872) as follows: "The learned report that the oscillation of the polar axis takes place from South to North at one time and from North to South at another and yet men do not notice it because of the size of the earth." From this passage we may infer that the Arabs knew about the oscillation of the polar axis before our times. But we must always be careful to ascertain whether any proof is adduced or not for such statements; for when proof is not forthcoming we must assume that it was simply a conjecture and not an established truth. One could even discover the foreshadowing of the Newtonian Laws of Gravitation among the Arabs. Dieterici, *Die Naturanschauung der Araber*, p. 145.

[3] He fixed the geographical latitude of the observatory at Maragaa at 37° 20′. The place is now fixed at 37° 21′.

wafa—Ibn Yunus—whose Astronomical Tables have come down to us—fills the first place. His work shows the advances made by the Arabs in mathematical sciences—advances wholly unsuspected till very recently. He used many rules and methods which closely approach those of modern times. We find in his works application of the tangents and secants—already used by Abulwafa in complicated cases—as also certain methods of the calculus which were not thought of in Europe till the XVIIIth century.[1]

In other countries swayed by Arab culture, distinguished representatives of this branch of science were not wanting either. It is enough to mention here the names of some Spanish astronomers: Arzakel (Alzarkal),[2] Maslama Majariti and Averroes.

Arzakel is said to have made no less than 402 observations to fix the apogee of the sun. So also he is reported to have made other observations which enabled him to fix, with great exactitude, the real value of the precession of the equinoxes.[3] (He fixed it at $49\frac{1}{2}'$-50″—whereas our modern Tables give 50″ 1). While Arzakel sheds lustre on Arab learning in the far west—Al-Beruni does so in the extreme East. It is not necessary to state that, with the rapid growth of astronomical studies, the manufacture of instruments needed for such studies kept pace. They made celestial globes of copper, nay, even of silver. Beruni used a quadrant of fifteen cubits.[4] Moreover, they prepared armillar spheres, astrolabes, and other instruments.[5] The spherical astrolabes furnish the best proof of their technical skill. They prepared them both at Baghdad and at Cairo, as also in Spain. Many specimens have come down to us. Besides these instruments, they had others in use which were partly known to antiquity and partly inventions of their own. To the latter class belong the sextant, which they used for observing the declination of the sun, and especially mirrors of polished metal.[6]

[1] Sédillot, *Prolég.*, LXV.

[2] His determination of the geographical latitude of Toledo is exact to the minute.—39° 51′.

[3] Sédillot, *Prolég.*, I, LXXX.

[4] Sédillot, *Matériaux*, p. 307.

[5] The town of Harran was specially noted for the manufacture of astronomical instruments. *Fihrist*, p. 284. They had plain and hemispheric astrolabes. *Fihrist*, p. 237. Ibn Khallikan, Sub Badi astralabi.

[6] Ma'arri, who had studied at Baghdad and had certainly visited the observatory there, says in his '*Lozimuyya*', "Take the mirror and

Side by side with this scientific study of the stars subsisted astrology. It is older than the former—just as superstition is older than scientific knowledge. When the second Abbasid Caliph wanted to found Baghdad he caused an astrologer to ascertain first the position of the stars with a view to begin his work at an auspicious moment. Even to-day astrologers play an important rôle in oriental courts.

Under the influence of the writings of the earlier Asiatic peoples—with which the Arabs soon became familiar—the latter developed a theory of the influence of the stars upon the Earth and the destiny of man. This led to the establishment of a general belief that the events of human life were all under the influence of the stars and their conjunctions. Thus they connected religious changes with the so-called great conjunctions of the stars, taking place every thousand years—dynastic changes every two hundred years—and changes in the *personnel* of the rulers every twenty years.[1]

Even the fate of man was fixed in advance by the aspect of the stars and the position of the planets at the moment of his birth. The cultured too were not altogether free from such ideas—though there were men who maintained that such knowledge of the future was of no advantage to man.[2] Certain prejudices—regarding lucky and unlucky days—not quite extinct yet—show how long similar ideas kept their hold in the West. The European calendars of the eighteenth century carefully note the influences of the planets.[3]

The relation between alchemy and chemistry was precisely the same as the relation between astrology and astronomy. Alchemy rested on the common assumption, accepted as

observe the stars which make even the sweetest honey taste bitter, for they undoubtedly point to death but not to resurrection." In another passage this very author says: The mirror of the astronomer, small as it is, shows him everything—be it inhabited or uninhabited. On the astronomical instruments of the Arabs, Reinaud, *Intro. à la Géog. d'Aboulfeda*, cxxxvi, and Sédillot, *Matériaux*, p. 304.

[1] On astrology—See Prof. Loth's dissertation in *Morgenländische Forschungen, Festschrift zu Prof. Fleischer's Jubiläum.* Leipzig, 1875. According to Ibn Ma'shar, Hamza Ispahani gives a similar astrological calculation on the duration of the Arab rule. He puts down the 4th century as the beginning of their decline. This turns out accidentally to be correct. It seems to suggest that the calculation was made after the event.

[2] Masudi, IV, p. 5.

[3] Read, in this connection, the opening lines of Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit.*

true in the East at the time, that sulphur and quick-silver were the elementary bases of all metals, and that, by the proper combination of the two, gold could be produced. Old is the 'auri sacra fames.' The Emperor Caligula is said to have attempted to make gold. Alchemy appears to have had its origin in Egypt, and to Egypt indeed it owes its name. The Emperor Diocletian, however, issued an edict ordering all Egyptian books on this art to be burnt.

The Arabs took to this delusive study at the time of the Omayyads, and although they failed to attain their object, through it they became familiar with the treatment of metals and minerals. Nor must we omit to ascribe to it the considerable advances that they made in technical and pharmaceutical sciences. In the Middle Ages alchemy, through the Arabs, made its way across Spain to Europe, and with alchemy a large number of organic and inorganic substances with their Arabic names. (Such as Alcohol, Alkali, Elixir, Alembic, etc., etc.)

The oldest Arab alchemist is the Omayyad prince Khalid Ibn Yazid, whose writings are lost, with the sole exception of a fragment of a didactic poem, from which it seems that the goal he aimed at was the art of making gold.[1] For the later alchemists his directions in obscure, poetic form, were a heritage of high value. They read thus: "Take a little talc with ammonia and what one finds in the street. Then take something which resembles borax, and mix these, with great care, in right proportion. If, then, you love God—you will attain mastery over all creatures." Next to Khalid Ibn Yazid comes Geber[2] (Jabir Ibn Hayyan). There is,

[1] On 'Khalid' see Abdur Razzaq's '*Barmaki*,' pp. 122 et sqq. Prof. Ruska, in his "*Arabische Alchemisten*," rejects the theory that Khalid was the first of his race to study and compose alchemical books. Beyond the fact that he may have been interested in alchemy there is nothing but fiction and fabrications. He holds the same opinion of the second great pioneer—Jafar-al-Sadiq, the sixth Imam of the Shiites—to whom many still extant treatises are ascribed.

[2] According to the *Fihrist*, a Muslim encyclopædia of the 10th century, Khalid Ibn Yazid was the first to make this science popular in Islam (Khalid died in 704). His fame however, is eclipsed by that of his disciple Geber, that is, Abu Musa Jabir Ibn Hayyan, who has many claims to be considered the first to whom the title of chemist may be legitimately applied. The most important work of Jabir is the *Great Book of Properties*. He defines chemistry as that branch of natural science which investigates the properties and generation of minerals and of substances obtained from animals and plants. Hearsay and mere

unfortunately, very little information forthcoming about his life. But despite the darkness which encircles him, every one who desires to follow the development of chemistry must form

assertion, according to Jabir, have no authority in chemistry. "*It must be taken as an absolutely rigorous principle, says he, that any proposition which is not supported by proofs is nothing more than an assertion which may be true or may be false. It is only when a man brings proofs of his assertion that we say your proposition is true.*" Mr. Holmyard in his *Chemistry to the Time of Dalton* says (p. 18): Jabir's views on the nature of metals represent a distinct advance upon Greek theories and upon the incomprehensible mysticism of the Alexandrian school. . . . The practical applications of chemistry (p. 20) were not neglected. Jabir describes processes for the preparation of steel and the refinement of other metals, for dyeing cloth and leather, for making varnishes to waterproof cloth and to protect iron, for the preparation of hair dyes and so on. He gives a recipe for making an illuminating ink for MSS. from golden marcasite, to replace the much more expensive one made from gold itself, and he mentions the use of manganese dioxide in glass-making. He knew how to concentrate acetic acid by the distillation of vinegar, and was also acquainted with citric acid and other organic substances.

Rhazes comes about a hundred yèars after Jabir. His interest in chemistry was mainly pharmaceutical, but his *Book of the Secret of Secrets* gives a good idea of the practical attitude of Muslims towards chemistry. Rhazes died in 923 or 932. With Avicenna, the Aristotle of Islam (d. 1036–7), we are still in contact with a mind of the highest order. Contemporary with, or slightly later than, Avicenna was the author of a remarkable book, entitled *Rutbatu'l-Hakim* or 'the Sage's Step' which is said to have been composed in 1047–50. For long this book was ascribed to Maslama al-Majriti, the most brilliant of a brilliant group of Spanish Arabs who flourished under Al-Hakam II (961–76). But this can no longer be maintained. The writer, whoever he was, was no armchair chemist, but a man who knew the discipline of laboratory work (pp. 23–24). The closing year of the 10th century witnessed the appearance of a remarkable book on pharmacology by the Persian Abu Mansur Muwaffak. It is based upon a comprehensive study of Greek, Indian, Arabian and Persian medicine, and although its outlook is primarily that of a physician, it contains much of interest to the chemist, p. 27. For the next two hundred years Islamic chemistry was quiescent and mysticism reasserted itself. Towards the middle of the 13th century one *Abul Qasim Mohamed Ibn Ahmad Al-Iraqi* wrote an interesting book on chemistry, fancifully entitled "*Knowledge acquired concerning the cultivation of Gold.*" . . The intrinsic interest of al-Iraqi's chemistry lies in the clarity of his thought and the logical precision of his arguments, supported at every point by an appeal to experimental facts; many of which he had himself observed in the laboratory, p. 28. The last Muslim chemist of importance is the versatile *Aidamir al-Jildaki*, who died in Cairo in the year 1361. There is no trace of European influence in any of Al-Jildaki's writings; although he was familiar with the Spanish Arabs, Al-Majriti and Ibn Arfa' Ra's. This point is of importance since there are facts and ideas in Al-Jildaki which are not to be found in earlier Muslim chemists and the question arises whether they were importations or indigenous growths, p. 29.

"Out of the inchoate body of mystical doctrine", says Mr. Holmyard, "which represented chemistry in the Alexandrian school the

acquaintance with his writings, for his views commanded universal homage throughout the Middle Ages. His writings, moreover, contain a fullness of chemical knowledge unattained before him. He was familiar with the methods of smelting and dissolution, as also with the process of converting fluids into hard substances. Nor was he unacquainted with filtering, distilling, sublimating. He accurately describes cupellation. He knows vitriol, alum, saltpetre, salammonia, alkali made of tartar and wood-ashes, soda, etc., etc. In his writings we first find a knowledge of mineral acids—probably impure sulphuric acid—certainly of nitric acid and of aqua regia.[1]

In his work: *Summa collectionis complementi secretorum naturae, Summa perfectionis magisterii*; he speaks to his pupils in the admonishing tone of a much experienced master: "Impress on thy mind all the details of thy operations and try to account for the phenomena under observation. It is as impossible to convert one metal into another as it is to transform horned cattle into goats, for, if nature needs a thousand years to form metals, how can we venture to achieve this feat?—we who rarely live beyond a hundred years!"[2]

It is apparent from the writings of Geber that they proceeded on the assumption that metals are made up of two or three elements—only the proportion varies in the different kinds of metal. He who can isolate the constituent elements and knows how to mix them again at the right temperature can produce the different metals at will. This seems to be the fundamental idea of alchemy. However erroneous this may be—it afforded an impetus to researches of far-reaching consequence. To the two fundamental constituents of metals—sulphur and mercury—Geber added arsenic as the third. It is undoubted that, in the course of alchemistic experiments, they even learnt to know the action

Muslims had extracted a definite scientific system in which experimental fact and theoretical speculation were for the first time brought into their true relation. . . . The practical applications of chemistry were acknowledged to be an important factor of the whole, so that Europe was able to start its chemical studies with a firm basis of fact, a coherent body of doctrine, and a realization of the value of chemistry to every day life, ready to hand. *For this privilege of our ancestors let us haste to pay our homage to the followers of the Prophet.*"

[1] Kopp: *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Chemie.* Braunschweig, 1875, III, 39, 40.

[2] Hoefer: *Hist. de la chimie,* Paris, 1842, I, 312.

of gases. Geber speaks mysteriously of the spirits which are combined with the metals, and which escape under the influence of fire. Only with the aid of these spirits is it possible, says he, to transform substances.

But he states the difficulties to be very great, for sometimes the spirits escape entirely, and at others simultaneously with the substances. This study henceforth continued to be the object of zealous pursuit, and however little this branch of Arabic literature may have been examined by experts, we can maintain that the East anticipated the West in many an important discovery.

Rhazes, whom we will come to know later as a great physician, speaks of the preparation of spirits by which, apparently, the preparation of alcoholic fluids is to be understood. He prepared oil of vitriol by distillation of green vitriol. I will now refer to yet one other discovery which was not made in Europe till the first-half of the sixteenth century. I mean the artificial production of ice.[1] In an old Arabic work we find the following passage: "Take a *Ritl* of the best South-Arabian Saltpetre; grind it well; then throw it in a new earthen pot with six *Ritl* of pure water; then put it in a closed oven, keep it there until $\frac{2}{3}$ of the water evaporates. Put, then, the remaining third in a well corked flask. If you now wish to prepare ice, take a new dish, filled with water, and mix with it ten *mithkal* of aqueous solution of saltpetre, and let it stand a while, and it will turn into ice."

The great merit of the Arab sciences is to have introduced an experimental tendency in the study of nature.

Less conspicuous, but in no way insignificant, are the achievements of the Arabs in medicine. Avoiding anatomy on religious grounds, they relied almost exclusively on Galenus, whose system maintained its supremacy till late in the Middle Ages. We cannot, justly or correctly, characterize the Arab medical system as naught but a purely borrowed system. It shows many features born of the peculiar life and mentality of its people. As devout empirics the Arab physicians made many notable observations—especially in pharmacy, wherein they went much further than the ancients.

[1] Beckmann, *Beiträge zur gesch. d. Erfindungen*, v. 187. The passage in question is in Ibn Abi Osaiba, *Hist. of the physicians*, Fol. 54. The information is drawn from an old work, *Kitab-ul-muqaddimah* of Nakhtawaih.

Early, indeed, they had a special class of apothecaries (Saidalani)—even in the armies they generally had apothecaries.[1] To the stock of tried medicines—inherited from antiquity—they added a number of fresh ones. The names of syrup (sharab), Julep (Golab) and many others prove that the West came to know these things only through contact with Arab civilization. In fact pharmacology was cultivated by Muslim physicians with great zeal. Early they established dispensaries, wrote medical encyclopædias, made compilations. In close connection with these stands their theory of poison and its antidote—a subject which greatly exercised their intellect.

When we turn our gaze from the translations from Syriac, Greek, and Indian languages made into Arabic under the first Abbasids—especially translations of works dealing with medicine, and natural sciences (Hippocrates, Dioscorides, the Commentary of Nicolas on Aristotle, even Indian works such as Ayurveda of Susruta, the work of Charaku, etc., etc.)—the first and the most considerable writer that greets us is Rhazes.[2] He lived, as a practising physician at Baghdad, and was even, for some time, the physician-in-ordinary to the Caliph Muqtadir. To him belongs the credit of having made many an important contribution to medical science.[3] Even in surgery he shows a considerable advance upon the Greeks. Especially noteworthy is his work on small-pox—one of the most striking monuments of Arab medical science—the best and the most exhaustive work on the subject.[4] In his ten books he deals with the whole system of Arab medicine. We need only mention here that up to the XVIth century the famous IXth book was the subject of lectures in the universities of Europe.

Next to Rhazes comes the Persian Ali Ibn Abbas Majusi, who wrote a comprehensive encyclopædia, which he dedicated to the Sultan Adad-ud-Doulah. He specially mentions that many of his observations were made in the hospitals, and states the first duty of a junior physician to be the study of individual cases at the sick-bed.[5] His dietetics is a masterpiece of that age.

As a physician and surgeon Abul Kasim Zahravi (Albucasis or Abulcasis of the Middle Ages) calls for special

[1] Abul Faraj, 256. [2] Ibn Khallikan, Vol. III, p. 311.
[3] Sprengel, III, 815.
[4] Haeser, *Lehrbuch d. Gesch d. medicin*, 1875, p. 572.
[5] Sprengel, II, 332. Abul Faraj, p. 326.

notice.[1] He wrote a book dealing with Arab Medical Science in its entirety. The section on Surgery is the most remarkable section of this book. It shows the mastery which the Arabs had already acquired in that art.

But the great Avicenna—whose system of Medical Science enjoyed for six centuries an undisputed supremacy in Europe—casts all his predecessors into the shade.[2] His "Canon of Medicine" is a magnificent piece of work—an encyclopædia of the entire Medical Knowledge of his time and is marked, at once, by striking insight, clarity and method. He is the supreme representative of Arab Medicine—their Galenus.[3] Even to-day some faint trace of his teachings is discernible. He ascribed a special efficacy to gold and silver, and to this is very probably traceable the modern practice of coating pills with gold and silver.[4] We see from his writings that even in his time they knew how to cure grey cataract by operation but they regarded such an operation as dangerous, and Avicenna himself speaks against it, and suggests depression instead.[5]

Enough has been said to indicate in general outline the scientific activity of the Arabs in this sphere of learning. We will not, now, perhaps, be disinclined to agree with a modern historian of civilization when he says: The Arab has impressed his intellectual stamp upon Europe, and not in too remote a future will Christendom concede this truth. He has left unfading traces of his finger on the sky which every one can see who reads the names of the stars on an ordinary celestial globe.[6]

To conclude our meditations on the natural sciences which were made the subjects of learned treaties by the Arabs, let us turn to Botany, Mineralogy, Zoology. None of these sciences were systematically studied or treated from a comprehensive point of view—although Arabic literature contains a number of independent works on such subjects.

[1] Zahravi's work on "Surgery" is in the *Khuda Bukhsh* Library at Patna. It is a very old MS., one of the oldest in that collection. The illustrations of the surgical instruments show the familiarity of the Arabs with instruments claimed to be of recent invention.

[2] See the learned Monograph of Carra de Vaux on *Avicenna.*

[3] Haeser, p. 586. Compare on Avicenna, Meyer, *Gesch der Botanik*, Vol. III, 193.

[4] Sprengel, II, 355. [5] Haeser, p. 589.

[6] Draper, *Int. Devel. of Europe*, II, Chapter XVI.

True, they made observations; they collected data with industry; but they never went beyond a mere empirical knowledge. They wrote on the peculiarities of plants, minerals and animals—but a sure judgment on the value of their achievements cannot yet be passed, for this field has been but little cultivated by experts. In most cases the medical and pharmaceutical interests entirely predominated.

Dinaweri (d. 282 A.H.; 894 A.D.) is the oldest Arab Botanist. His book on 'Plants,' judging from the extant extracts, must have been very valuable. He devoted his attention to plant geography. In Botany the writings of Dioscorides—translated early into Arabic—served as a basis. As a special achievement of the Arabs we may mention the correct observations they made on the sexual differences of certain plants, such as palm and hemp. They apparently knew of the circulation of the sap, and its period.

They divided plants into three classes: those that grew from the stem—those that grew from the seed—and those that spontaneously sprouted up.[1]

Despite all shortcomings and one-sidedness—compared to the Greeks and Romans—immense were the advances made by the Arabs in Botany. The Arabs extended the field of researches—observed nature—and collected facts with untiring patience. Like the ancients they failed, indeed, to deal with Physiological and Philosophical aspects of the plant, but even here they far outstripped the ancients in the collection of materials and the carefulness of their observations. (Meyer: Gesch. d. Botanik, III, 326).

In Zoology they accomplished nothing of note. Aristotle

[1] See Journal Asiat., 1853, Feb.-March, 263. The theory of the soul of plants which Avicenna puts forth is not an original theory. It rests upon what Aristotle says in the second book at the end of Chapter IV of his treatise on the 'Soul'. Cf. Meyer, *Gesch. der Botanik*, III, 197. Keen observations on the nature of plant is the special merit of the later Spanish Botanist Abul Abbas Nabati. He made extensive journeys for botanical purposes and lived in the XIIIth century. He visited Alexandria in 613 A.H. (1216 A.D.) In this respect his countryman Ibn Baitar of Malaga even excelled him. His work on medicinal herbs is a glorious monument of industry. We find there the description of some 1,400 plants most of which he personally knew. He travelled extensively, and in the description of the plants he not infrequently tells us the country where a particular plant is to be found. He studied and investigated plant-geography as sedulousy as did his predecessor Abul Abbas Nabati.

was their chief authority. They wrote, indeed, regarding the properties, the mode of life, and the habits of animals but it is methodless and, for the most part, unscientific. Only in the treatment of horses did they make conspicuous progress and acquire striking skill. They divided animals into three classes: the oviparous, the viviparous, and those that originated spontaneously (Journal Asiatique, 1853, February–March, p. 263).

More, indeed, was achieved in the domain of mineralogy—although very little has been made known to us by specialistic treatises. One conspicuous contribution, however, should not be passed over here. It is the researches made by Beruni—the astromoner, mathematician and naturalist already mentioned—regarding the specific gravity of minerals. His theories regarding the origin and formation of minerals are based upon the then dominating ideas of the Greeks—especially of Aristotle. Be that as it may, meritorious are his essays on the determination of specific gravity. He laid down that the specific gravity of a body can be determined by ascertaining the volume of water displaced by it; that is to say, by weighing it first in air and then in water, the difference between the two amounts being the weight of the volume of water displaced.

Beruni determined the specific gravity of eighteen different substances: nine metals and nine precious stones. The most remarkable thing is that his results closely agree with the latest European determinations. He also gives a description of a somewhat imperfect hydrostatic balance, made for this purpose, which has been substantially improved since.

A treatise on the formation of stones and mountains, erroneously ascribed to Avicenna, translated from Arabic into Latin, gives noteworthy views. It is stated there that mountains are of two kinds: those that arise by the elevation of parts of the Earth's crust and those that come into existence by the action of water—making subterranean passages, excavating valleys and depositing the detritus in other places. We see that already the Arab thinkers come very near the theories of elevation of plutonism and neptonism.

The Arab mineralogists particularly occupied themselves with precious stones. They assumed that precious stones originated under the influence of heat, of dryness, of cold, and of moisture. Thus they thought that corundum (yaqut)

originated from gold. If gold was exposed to a high temperature in dry air, the resulting mineral became ruby. If the temperature was lower, it became a colourless corundum. In a temperature of predominating cold and dryness, stones of dark or black colour were formed. They thought copper to be the fundamental element of malachite, lapis lazuli and turquoise; iron of loadstone, amethyst and blood-stone. Silver was regarded as the fundamental element of jade and jasper; lead of jet and obsidian: while diamond was supposed to be transmuted gold.

If, now, we turn to that branch of learning wherein philosophy and natural science came into close contact, the philosophical views of the Arabs may thus be summarized. In the material world minerals constitute the lowest stage; next comes the plant; then the animal; then man. Higher than man are pure, spiritual beings, the angels—beyond whom there is naught but God. Thus a continuous progressive chain binds the lowest to the highest. But, pursuing an inner impulse, the human soul strives to break away from the physical plane, and, ridding itself of it, rises aloft, to revert to God, whence it has come.

These and similar ideas—showing striking kinship with Neo-Platonic philosophy—found wide diffusion in the later mystical schools, and were reconciled with the Qur'an and the revealed religion by allegorical interpretations, more or less forced.

While a ladder of ascending development united the lowest to the highest, the theory of cosmogony—the beginning of things—shows a descending scale. For the origin of the world reliance was apparently placed upon the emanation-theory of the Alexandrian philosophy. The following is the graduated scale: Creator, Reason, World-soul, and Primordial Substance. From the union of the World-soul with Primordial Substance, everything has arisen—the realm of Existence showing a two-fold aspect: a material, corporeal aspect (perceivable by the sense-organs), and a spiritual aspect—conceivable only by reason. The material and the spiritual worlds thus correspond to the dualism of body and soul.

The sharp division between mind and body naturally suggested enquiry into the activities of the thinking mind. The Aristotelian writings on logic, especially Porphyry's Introduction, were chosen as the basis for this enquiry, and

were enthusiastically studied. Pre-occupation with logic soon became an absorbing passion with Arab thinkers. The artificial classification of the process of thinking—the intellectual exercise of distinguishing truth from fallacies—exactly suited their mind, only too prone to subtleties. All eminent men—Kindi, Farabi, Avicenna—passionately took to logic. Avicenna, indeed, struck many a new vein in it. Logic became an indispensable preliminary to all higher studies, and many treatises and handbooks were written on that subject—Aristotle being the chief inspiring influence.

While reason was thus trained, while the path in which it was to move was rigidly marked out, while the faculty of judgment was controlled, and the wheel of thinking machinery was regulated, Metaphysics—or, as the Arabs literally translate the Greek term, the science that lies beyond nature—became the theatre of riotous fancy. There was no embargo on thought. Every one was at liberty to think what he would and say what he thought. The majority—possessing neither the capacity nor the time nor the inclination to think for themselves—walked complacently and unquestioningly in the path of orthodoxy. But this notwithstanding, there grew up numerous theological sects and parties, with sharply divergent views.

Speculating on the soul—its purity, its purpose, its admission into the material and spiritual joys of paradise, its eventual re-absorption in the World-Soul, in God—innumerable questions of ethics and morals presented themselves, forming gradually a special, comprehensive literature of their own.

When, under the first Abbasids, the Arabs became familiar with Greek philosophy, and applied themselves to the study of the natural sciences, a new ferment was introduced into the intellectual movements of the day.

Logic sharpened the weapon of polemics—sound human understanding challenged blind faith. Proofs based on mathematics vanquished those drawn from the Qur'an, and the study of the natural sciences opposed the stubborn ignorance of theology.

Amid these circumstances arose the first Rationalistic School, whose supporters—the Mutazalites—were dominant for some time. But soon their opponents also learned the use of those very weapons which the Mutazalites had handled with such skill. The result was Scholasticism—a veritable religious

philosophy—which served the cause of orthodoxy and defended dogmatism. But, despite the orthodox reaction, a limited circle persisted in their devotion to philosophical pursuits. They not only studied the learning of the ancients, but even strove to go beyond it. They made independent researches, and sought to reconcile the results with the prevailing religious system of the day.

We should not refuse to Arab philosophy the compliment of recognizing it as being distinguished by a fearless rationalism and a lofty moral purity. Thus the poet Ma'arri [1] says:

"Do good, and do it for its beauty, and think not of any reward from God for it. It rests with him to reward when it pleases him; for great is his power. If not, our best reward is death." And in another passage he says: "Do good—always for its own sake; and be just, *not* for any prospect of gain."

And thus does Averroes express himself: "Amongst the most dangerous of ideas we must reckon that which regards virtue as a means of attaining happiness. In such a case virtue has *no* value; for, then, abstention from vice is only in the hope of being recompensed with rich interest. The brave will only seek death to escape a greater evil; and the just only respect the property of another to receive later twice as much. These views, says Averroes, "permeate the entire mental attitude of the people—particularly of children. They do not, in any way, tend to their improvement. I know," he adds, "men of impeccable morality who reject these views, yet who stand in no way behind those who accept them."

Only by spiritual purification—according to these old moralists—could the soul soar back to the World-Soul—out of which it has come—union with it being the supremest end of humanity. They regarded the human soul as an emanation from the highest World-Soul—pervading the entire spiritual life. According to their view, the soul was nothing but a drop of the divine spirit. Thus says Hajjaj Ibn Yakzan:—"The spirit of life which permeates all humanity is one and the same, and is not different in individuals, except that it is divided into so many souls. If we gather together these divided parts and put them all into one vessel, the constituent elements will form

[1] He had heard lectures by philosophers at Baghdad, and was inclined towards materialism.

but one single whole. They are not unlike water or other liquid distributed amongst a number of separate vessels. Both separate and united, they are one and the same substance.[1]

These pantheistic views, coming to the Arabs from the Alexandrians, were steadily developed by them in their philosophic schools.

Next to the theory of the original unity of souls, the most important teaching of Arab philosophy was that the world was uncreated and eternal. The champions of this view were the *Dhaherites*.[2] They came into violent conflict with the Orthodox; for they relied upon the evidence of the senses, and denied the existence of the spiritual world.

The fundamental doctrines of these old-time materialists were precisely the same as those of that school to-day. But, because of their ignorance of the natural sciences, as compared with what is known now, these doctrines had a more extended influence, a wider sway.

We cannot fail to notice a similarity between Orient and Occident in the course of philosophical studies. Both in the East and the West these studies encountered an implacable foe—an all-powerful priesthood. That foe quickly decided that such a form of intellectual activity was a serious menace to unquestioning faith. It therefore set its face against it. Under Mutawakkil the orthodox reaction against the Mutazalites triumphed, and its triumph meant the enslavement of free-thought. Henceforth temporal power ranges itself on the side of orthodoxy, and forged, again and again, stern measures against philosophical studies. Next to Mutawakkil, Mutadid made himself conspicuous by his fiery zeal for orthodoxy. In the year 279 A.H. (892 A.D.) he forbade the sale of philosophic and polemical books.[3] Then came the fanatical Qadir, with a formal edict of proscription against heretics and free-thinkers.[4]

[1] Risalat Hajjaj Ibn Yakzan, p. 74.

[2] Goldziher's valuable monograph on the '*Dhaherites*' is authoritative on the subject.

[3] Dhahabi, *Ibar*.

[4] Von Kremer, *Gesch. d. herrsch. Ideen*, p. 127. Later they simply consigned to the flames books which antagonized Orthodoxy. It will be interesting to look at the measures adopted against heresy in Christendom. "The code of Justinian contained some sixty enactments against heresy. It also recognized the burning of Manichees, thus giving some sort of legal precedent for the sporadic outbursts of mob

If, now, we glance backward, we shall find that the greatest achievements of the Arabs were in the empirical sciences. With incredible industry they observed, they investigated, they collected, they arranged the results of their own experiences, or those of their forerunners.

In narration and description they shone. History and geography,[1] therefore, take the first place in their literature. As acute observers and thinkers, however, they achieved great distinction in mathematics and astronomy. They also built up an elaborate system of law and a science of language. But in the realms of the mind—in abstract thinking—they never went beyond Aristotle and Plato, or, if they did so venture, they were led, by an unbridled imagination, into dreamings and illusions, ending in empty mysticism.

It remains to speak of general literature and of the later development of the science of language. To this we shall add an account of the learned institutions, and with it close our present survey.

As against realistic studies, the science of language was given an unjustifiable pre-eminence by the Arabs. The reason for this must be sought in its close affinity with Qur'anic studies and theological pre-occupations connected therewith. The systematic study of their own language, therefore, was carried on with a consuming passion. Such was the case even in the first century of Islam! Later, the Arabicised foreigners devoted themselves to this branch of learning with marked fervour, for to some extent, it was regarded in the light of a religious duty, inasmuch as through such studies alone could

violence that had occurred during the XIth and XIIth centuries, Philip Augustus, who burnt a few heretics as enemies of society, was clearly influenced by Roman precedent. Even Pedro of Aragon in his ferocious enactment of 1197 probably knew that he was following the policy of a Christian emperor." Maycock, *Inquisition, Nineteenth Cent.*, Sept. 1925, p. 472. For Manichees, see Burkitt, *Religion of the Manichees*, Cambridge University Press, 1925.

[1] Chapter III of Wright's *Geographical Lore of the Time of the Crusades* contains an illuminating account of Muslim Geography. On p. 392 we are told that Ptolemy's *Geography* was translated into Arabic at least three times: (1) by Ibn Khurdadbah not earlier than about 846–847 A.D. but for private use only; (2) by Yaqub ibn Ishaq al-Kindi, before 874 A.D. and (3) by Thabit ibn Qurra (826–901 A.D.). On Moslem methods of determining latitude, see p. 395, note 36. For a general review of Arabic Geography in the Middle Ages, see Schoy, *Geography of the Moslems*, 1924.

the Qur'an and the traditions be guarded against faulty reading and wrong interpretations.

Wonderful must have been the love and enthusiasm of the first grammarians for their subject! It is related of one that his collection, consisting chiefly of phrases and expressions in vogue among the Beduins of the desert, filled up his room to the roof. With great zeal even Pre-Islamite poetry and poetical fragments were collected, and Asma'i reports of the same scholar that, during the ten years that he worked under him, he never heard aught but Pre-Islamite poetry in support of a grammatical rule.[1]

To this school—called the School of Basra—belonged the most celebrated authority on Arabic grammar—Sibwaiyh. Up to the latest times, his grammar held its position as an accepted standard grammar of the Arabic language.

While, with Sibwaiyh, the School of Basra reached its splendour, the School of Kufa did not lag behind. But the striking fact to note is that, like Basra, the leaders of the School of Kufa, too, were of Persian descent.

Kisai was a Persian by birth. Despite his great authority slighting is the report regarding him that comes from Basra. It charges him with fraud and imposture. In this connexion we must not overlook the fact that most of the grammarians cultivated this branch of learning as a means of livelihood, and thus they vied with each other in artificial hair-splitting differences and the recognized tricks of the trade.

We have before us the evidence of a contemporary author which clearly shows the spirit in which many of these grammarians carried on their work to earn money. Asked by a friend why it was that his works were not written in an intelligent style, the much renowned Akhfash replied: "I do not write my books for the love of God, as a pious work. If I were to make myself always intelligible, my readers would have no use for me. My object merely is to gain gold. I, therefore, write *something* in an easy, intelligible style which the reader understands. This makes him curious to find out what he does not understand, and thus I earn money, which is my end-all and be-all."

Later, indeed, literary fraud assumed numerous shapes. But, to do no injustice to the honest Akhfash, we must add

[1] In Hamasa (p. 382) will be found the rest of his poetical remains.

that, *even* before him, a grammarian of Basra (Khalaf, the red, who lived about 155 A.H.) occupied himself with poetical forgeries. Imitating the language of the ancient poets, he passed off his own poetical effusions as theirs, and introduced them, as such, into his collection,[1]

Most wearisome and uninspiring are the writings of these old grammarians, but at least they have some compensating merits. They founded lexicography, by explaining rare words in the Qur'an and the traditions, and by collecting passages in support of their exposition. They first set up the system of metrics ; they made the first collection of the old popular songs and commented upon them, and, with amazing industry, gathered together proverbs, and addressed themselves to etymology.

Later, when special store was set on florid diction and shining rhetoric, different kinds of style were evolved (Ilm-ul-Badi, Al-mani-wal-Bayan, Al-insha, etc., etc.). All this gave rise to that branch of learning which was called " Ilm-ul-Adab" —the " Humanities."

Just as, with Europeans, classical study formed the foundation of the " Humanities" so, with the Arabs did the study of the old poets.

This line of study led to numerous works of importance in literature. Incessant, unwearying, was their activity in collecting and arranging words and phrases. All this was but a prelude to great works on lexicography which were to follow.

But the predominance of the " Humanities " over realistic studies marks the era of decline. Special stress was laid on grammatical technicalities—on acquaintance with poetical literature. To shine in this kind of lore, miscellaneous collections were made (Nawadir, Mudhaherat, Mudhamerat), wherein information without order or method was set down.[2]

Thus a literary proletariat, untroubled about the future, grew up. Young men of letters, without means, living upon their wits and poetry, roamed from town to town and village to village. Wherever there was a gathering of literary dilettanti they were ready for linguistic battles over words. The rich and powerful always hastened to them with their help and gifts, for, in that age these dilettanti were dangerous

[1] Flügel, *Grammatische Schulen der Araber*, p. 32.
[2] For instance, *Kitabul Aghani*.

as enemies ; since, with the dreaded weapon of satire in their hands, they could, at a stroke, imperil a reputation or ruin a name.

At worst they could always take up their residence in the mosque.[1] The best representative of this class, whom Hariri so faithfully describes, is that very Hamadani whom he himself accepted as his model for the *Maqamah*.[2] Early in his youth he left his native town and wandered about in Islamic countries. From his letters it seems that he betook himself to the East—to Naisabur, Merv, Herat—where, in the *Wazir* of the powerful Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, he found a warm patron, and at last secured a comfortable home. He himself tells us how he travelled to Naisabur, to make the acquaintance of the then famous poet and man-of-letters there—Abu Bakr Chwarizimy. Let us hear him in his own words : " When I entered Khorasan, I decided upon Naisabur as the goal of my journey. I did not care to have any neighbours other than the noble sons of Naisabur. There I wanted to lift the saddle from my camel, there I wanted to pitch my tent, for long ago had I heard of that very learned Abu Bakr whose acquaintance I was keen to make, and on whom I had unseen bestowed my affection. I had imagined that on entering the town he would at once cast off the shell from his kernel—that he would hasten to greet me in all friendliness—that he would be at once emotional and demonstrative, for the tie of literary achievements united us, strangers though we were. But I was deceived, disappointed. He showed a very different spirit and attitude—the reason being that on our journey the Beduins had robbed us—had rifled our packages—had divested us of our gold and silver ; and thus, on reaching Naisabur, our hands were emptier than a wall—our purses drier than sand—our clothes more tattered than the mantle of a school-master—in fact worse still.

Out of modesty I did not force myself upon him. I only desired his neighbourhood—to see his door-sill and to depart. Early in the morning I wrote a letter to him, full of praises and flowery diction ; and all that I got in return was mere sediment from his wine-cask ; but I forgave him, and told him to do what he thought best. I went up to him, but

[1] Jhya, III, 489.
He died in 398 A.D. = 1007–8 A.D. at Herat.

he tried to avoid me, and yet I put the best complexion upon his behaviour. I drank from the goblet he offered me—bitter though the draft was. I accepted the mantle which he presented me—small and insufficient though it was. I ascribed his behaviour to the wretchedness of my condition, and to the rents in my garment, and I wrote, once again, as follows, to gain his friendship and to conquer his stubborn disposition :—

"In the name of Allah, the merciful, the compassionate. The very noble Abu Bakr,—may God lengthen his days !—makes the position of his guest very difficult. He does many things which are slighting and hurtful. He half closes his eyes and blinks, and, with a motion of his hand, prevents people from rising from their seats when I enter the room. He swallows half his words, and his salutation consists of a mere shrug of his shoulders. But I took it all indulgently, for a man is estimated by the weight of his purse and the elegance of his dress, though with me coarse and torn was my garment. If Abu Bakr only had the experience of a roaming, wandering life, he would have listened to the stranger—lifted the saddle from his camel—revived his waning strength with his generous hospitality. Let the noble Abu Bakr treat these taunts as he pleases. The letter is, indeed, prompted by friendly feelings and its bitter contents are mixed with honey."

His reply, as you may well imagine, was cold and cutting. Avoiding all further contact I allowed him to continue in his conceit—wiping out all remembrance of him from my mind. Thus did a month pass away—whilst that noble soul continually made remarks which were carried to me. Then I took up my pen and spoke my mind. Thereupon he collected a whole army of students and servants, and came along in full force to the house of the leader ot the prayer—Abdul Tayyub—where the meeting was to take place. I also went there in the hopes of reconciliation, and thanked him for coming, but it was lightning without rain—a mirage of the desert without blessing—for he made no advances towards me, and it seemed as if he literally intended to demonstrate the truth of the couplet :

"I am for standing aloof and apart;
For that is the one thing most
Suited to us both."

And when the dust in the arena had subsided, he watched to see whether I had come to the fray on horseback or on a donkey. Lo, the question, then, was—Which of us two would claw the other first and throw the other to the ground? By jokes the mediators tried to ease the situation. But I said to myself, "He who comes to the arena and fancies himself invulnerable is not quite in his right senses, for in me he has an antagonist of a fierce kind who pierces and breaks and crushes his opponent." Then a saying of the Prophet came to my mind:

> "Peace is preferable, and, when the
> Other retreats cease to fight."

I then quoted a poem.

> "Accept peace and be content with the
> Honours of war—naught but fright thou hast had."

But he thought I was deceiving him, and took me as if I was saying: Enough!

Once more an attempt at reconciliation was made. It was Abu Ali who tried it. He had taken it upon himself to do it; and, when he asked me, I answered as I thought he wished me to answer. I said: "I am eager for a meeting. It is exactly what I want."

The clumsy fellow at last came in insolent defiance, surrounded by a crowd. We glanced at them, and by heaven, we thought he was anxious to destroy a hostile army or to cause a massacre! But when we saw them with big paunches and shaven heads, we realized that it was all show, and that there was no cause for alarm. I rose to receive him, and he took his seat on the *divan*. I let his anger exhaust itself and the arrows of his vexation pass out of his quiver. I then spoke to him.

"O! you, beloved of God—quieten your spirit—master your fear—control your impulse and restrain yourself—dance not without the accompaniment of flute—emit no spark without cause or compulsion—for when we invited you it was in the belief that you would instruct us—therefore let only your horse run the race—let us know your intellectual powers and intellectual worth."

"What do you mean by that?" said he, and I replied: "Let us see the strength of your memory, or let us enter into

competition in poetry or in prose, or, if you prefer it, we shall hit upon improvisation." He accepted the last proposal, and I suggested a poem of Mutanabbi as a model:

> Awake night after night
> Ah! who can keep awake like me!
> The streaming eyes merely
> Stir the smouldering passion within.

Abu Bakr forthwith began:

> When I begin my improvisation
> Thee I see ablaze in anger.
> As I go on polishing my verses
> Grief I see surging in thee.
> When I compose, I compose swiftly,
> But composition with thee is only slow and clumsy.

With these lines inspiration failed him, and the chain of composition suddenly stopped. I then began without fear.

> Slowly, friend, to battle thou camest with blunt sword.
> Sheathe it again, before thou provokest laughter.
> Words fail thee, but from me they unceasingly gush forth.
> Heavy the blow I deal,
> Ever I keep myself within the bounds of courtesy.

Even in the hardest thing I have said, I have shown consideration to thy good name.

> Shame on thee O fool!
> The fire that thou hast kindled hath only scorched thee.

When the fire of these verses scorched and dazed him he grew angry, and, in his anger, he began to fight over trifles. The bystanders realized that he was losing the battle and cheered me. This so completely rattled him that he forgot all the rules of courtesy and showered abuse upon me. But I remained silent, to bring home to the assembly my self-control and my spirit of forbearance."

The duel between the ready-tongued Hamadani and his opponent (which we have considerably abridged in our free translation) continued for some time, ending in a shameful discomfiture of the latter. It offers a good insight into the literary activities of the age, and shows us the errors into which a people so wonderfully gifted as the Arabs eventually fell. They possessed wit, genius, fertility, resourcefulness, dexterity

in prose and verse, and, in addition, a powerful memory which retained all the most excellent things in literature and manipulated them at will.

But, despite all these gifts which scholars and savants need, all higher strivings perished, frittered away in literary contests such as the one we have described between Hamadani and Abu Bakr. Hamadani and Hariri's witty and intellectual *causeries* are the last flickers of the Arab intellect.

We cannot close our sketch of the literary and scientific achievements of the Arabs without mentioning that at an early date they possessed a considerable literature dealing with arts and crafts in their most diverse branches. Thus there was a special literature on weapons and implements used in warfare; on fire-works and war-machines; [1] on falconry and hunting; on poisons and spices; on jewels and precious stones; on metals; on magic, interpretation of dreams, jugglery,[2] and so forth.

A minute discussion on this subject would be fruitless here, for very few of these writings have come down to us, and the subject itself appealed only to a narrow circle, and was of fleeting importance. Moreover, it never was crowned with a halo of erudition.

Early, too, there arose a considerable literature on music and song. Songs were collected, the tunes noted, and even methodically arranged. Even music was scientifically studied and, following the example of the Greeks, great importance was attached to that study.[3]

Having already dealt with poetical literature, we must now pass on to a consideration of the literature of fables and romances.

The collection of "A Thousand and One Nights" is well known. It has long been established that that charming collection is based upon Persian and Indian models. It alone suffices to give us a correct idea of the literature of romance. This literature of romance began at the court of the Omayyads, but, under the Abbasids, among prosperous townfolk of Baghdad, the taste for such literary fare became keen and widespread. At first special delight was found in the Indian

[1] Fihrist, 314, 315.

[2] The best book on jugglery is the *Book of Jaubery* exhaustively dealt with by De Goeje in the Z.D.M.G.

[3] For further information, see Kosegarten: *Alii Ispahanensis liber cantilenarum magnus, Greifswalde*, 1840. J.R.A.S., Jan., 1845, pp. 61–80.

fables of animals, which writers hastened to imitate in Arabic. This was followed by imaginary and romantic stories. The origin of the story of Sindbad the Sailor is to be sought at Basra. Having begun, this literature soon assumed an immense bulk. But, apart from the earlier part of the "Thousand and One Nights," nothing has come down to us from the glorious days of the Caliphate.

According to my view the great Antar romance originated in the days of the Crusades. Nor can the romance of Dhul-Himma and Saif-ul-Yazan [1] be dated earlier. The origin of the History of Banu Hilal should also be set down to about the same period.[2] From such beginnings arose the historical romance—wherein historical events were romantically treated—as, for instance, in the history of the first conquests, by the so-called pseudo-Waqidi, or the history of the Fatimide Caliph Hakim.[3]

Some of these works—Antar, Dhul-Himma, Banu Hilla—even to-day enjoy a great popularity, and are, in the real sense of the term, books of the people.

It will require much time and labour to give to this fascinating branch of Arabic literature the same thorough attention and treatment as we have bestowed on Arab history and geography.

Literary and scientific activity soon resulted in the formation of small societies of scholars and scientists. Such a coterie we have already come to know—the broadminded, progressive club of Basra. A work has come down to us which is apparently the production of such an association of learned

[1] J.R.A.S., July, 1925, p. 537. "The romance of Saif-ul-Yazan is mentioned by Lane as one of the stock pieces in the repertory of the professional Cairene story-tellers. Saif, the Yamanite prince who, towards the close of the sixth century A.D., delivered his country from the Abyssinian yoke, is here transformed into a Muslim paladin. This romance though worthless as literature, is a rich mine for students of folk-lore. Herr Paret (*Sirat Saif ibn Dhiyazan: Ein Arabischer Volksroman*) assigns it tentatively to the fifteenth century. The main argument in favour of this date is the antagonism, running through the whole romance, between the Muslim Arabs, typified by Saif, and the Negroes and Abyssinians who are represented by his opponent, king Saif Arad."

[2] Banu Hilal is that Beduin tribe which, in the middle of the XIth century A.D., burst into Africa from Egypt. This event, poetically adorned, was worked into an extensive romance. Von Kremer, *Gesch. der herrsch. Ideen Islams*, p. 401. Ibn Khaldun, *General History*, VI, 18.

[3] The Imperial Library of Vienna possesses a volume of this work.

and industrious men. I mean the so-called *Treatises of the Brethren of Purity*—a collection of learned and scientific papers embracing the *then* entire philosophy and sciences.[1]

But, apart from private societies of congenial souls, mosques specially were the centres not merely of religious but of learned activities. They served the purpose of the first academies and schools. People gathered there to discuss not merely learned but also political questions. There sat one or other professor on a rush-mat, or a small rug, on the floor, leaning against a column which supported the roof, around him a circle of listeners, friends, acquaintances. Nay, such a sight may even now be seen in the mosques of the large towns of the East. In this fashion are lectures delivered to this day in the chief mosque of Cairo. When a text is explained, the book lies on a reading-stand before the professor. He either himself reads the text, and explains it orally, or lets one of his pupils read it, while he himself explains as the reading goes on. Of old many of these professors had large audiences. The instruction was absolutely free. Only in primary schools (Kuttab) —where children were taught reading and writing, and which were purely private institutions—did the teachers, who maintained them as a means of livelihood, charge a fee. Then, not only strictly theological studies, but also philological studies, closely connected with them, were carried on in the mosques. Even certain philosophical and mathematical studies were included in the syllabus.

But special institutions—the so-called Madrassahs or academies—soon came into being The reason for their creation is to be sought, not in the fact that the mosques had become too small for the increasing number of students, or that such an increase interfered with their original character as Houses of Worship, but in the growth of a class of men—devoted to learned studies—who bitterly experienced, as is

[1] Prof. Dieterici has undertaken the laborious task of doing them into German. "The Brothers of piety and sincerity" made some noteworthy contributions to the science of geographical meteorology, but these were not passed on to the Western world. They understood, among other phenomena, the warming of the atmosphere by radiation from the earth's surface and its connection with the angle of incidence of the sun's rays; the influence of mountains upon precipitation; and the origin of springs and rivers. (Hellmann, *Denkschr.*, 1904, pp. 18, 23–41). Apud Wright's *Geographical Lore of the time of the Crusades*, p. 395.

experienced still, the difficulty of earning a living through abstract learning.

To insure a competence for such men, and to put them in a position to carry on, unharassed, their particular line of study—as also to help those that needed help in their studies—the beautiful practice of founding Madrassahs came into vogue. In 383 A. H. (993 A. D.) the first institution of this kind was established in Baghdad.[1] Another followed in the year 400 A.H. (1009-10 A. D.) at Naisabur. Rapidly their number multiplied, with the result that all great towns soon possessed them. To found a Madrassah was regarded as a pious, meritorious act. Not only were Madrassahs founded but they were also endowed with the necessary funds for their upkeep, for the pay of their professors, and for scholarships to students. Often, indeed, did the professors and the students receive free board and lodging. To the travelling scholars specially did the Madrassahs offer a secure shelter and a warm welcome. A chapel and a library invariably formed part of the Madrassah.

Noticeable was the Madrassah for its external appearance. It was usually built of hewn stones. On the door was the dedication-inscription carved on stone. The interior cheifly consisted of a prayer-hall, in front of which stood an open courtyard. In the midst of that was a large raised reservoir, and round this courtyard—invariably surrounded by arcades—extended the out-houses, consisting of small rooms which opened into the courtyard. Other rooms were used as lecture-rooms or as libraries.

The Madrassahs of Cairo mostly have on the upper storey, an open hall, with double circular arched windows resting on a pillar constructed in the centre. Such a loggia is called *Manzara*, and this style of building seems to have been common in Baghdad.

From the fourth century onward such colleges were founded everywhere. A liberal encouragement and support were extended to the literary proletariat and the travelling scholar. Thus the indigent scholar, wandering in pursuit of learning, was always sure there of free board and lodging. Not only were theological studies carried on in the Madrassahs, but, in large towns, such as Damascus, Cairo and Baghdad,

[1] Ibn Athir, IX, 71. According to Suyuti: *Husnul-Muhadherah*, II, 141, Nizam-ul-Mulk, the first minister of Arslan, was the founder of the first Madrassah in Baghdad in 457 A.H.

there were also Madrassahs where medicine was taught, and in Baghdad there was one where a specialist lectured on Arab philology.[1]

A reporter—not altogether trustworthy—tells us that Walid I was the founder of the first hospital.[2] But, as a matter of fact, hospitals came early into existence in Baghdad. Under Muqtadir a Christian physician—Sinan Ibn Thabit—held the post of Director of Hospitals in Baghdad. The very same Caliph (in the year 306 A. H., 918-9 A. D.) founded a new hospital on a grand scale, which cost him 200 dinars a month.[3] He also introduced a system of compulsory examination of physicians by the above-mentioned Director of Hospitals. Only such as passed this examination [4] were given the license to practise. The Buyyid Sultans, too, founded hospitals in their capital.[5] Nor did other towns remain without them.[6] At all these institutions medical studies were pursued.

For the promotion of astronomical studies observatories were established. Thus, Mamun founded an observatory at Baghdad, while a private observatory there bore the name of the family of Banu Alam. At Rakka, on the Syrian frontier, stood another, and, in Cairo, yet another, built by the Caliph Hakim.[7]

We now pass on to libraries. In 381 A. H. (Ibn Athir IX, 246), the first public library is said to have been established in Baghdad. But, even earlier than this, Mamun had founded a learned academy (*House of Wisdom*) which possessed a large collection of books. This example was followed by a Fatimid Caliph who also founded a *House of Learning* (Dar-al-Ilm) in Cairo.[8] Immediately before its destruction by the Mogals, Baghdad posessed no less than thirty-six libraries (Reinaud: *Intro. à la Geogr. d'Aboulfeda*, CXL, 11). That in other Muslim towns, too, there was no lack of libraries,

[1] The philologist Jawaliki held this post.
[2] Thalabi, Lata'if, p. 13.
[3] *Cf.* Taghribardy, II, 203.
[4] Ibn Usaiba, Fol. 133.
[5] Ibn Athir, IX, 12. See, Ibn Khallikan, Vol. II, note 2, p. 45. For the hospital built by Adad-ud-Dowlah, *see* Ibn Khallikan, Vol. II, p. 481.
[6] Makrizi, Khitat, 405.
[7] Fawat, II, 189, in the biography of Nasiruddin Tusi.
[8] Makrizi, Khitat, 458. Khuda Bukhsh, *Politics in Islam*, p. 227.

the information regarding the libraries at Merv abundantly proves.

Maqdisi—an Arab traveller, whose acquaintance we have already made—relates that he found a library at Ramhurmuz which was different only in one respect from that of Basra, namely, that the latter had a richer collection.

The librarian at Ramhurmuz, he reports, was a scholar who, in addition to his duties, delivered lectures on the Mutazalite system of philosophy. In Shiraz he found yet another great library in a palace which had been built by a Buyyid prince. He describes the edifice as one of the most extensive and exquisite architectural achievements of that age. He speaks of the library thus: "The library occupies a special portion of the building. It has a director, a librarian, a superintendent—officers chosen from the *élite* of the town. The founder has provided the library with books of all kinds. The great hall is in a huge *Suffah* (*i.e.*, a platform walled up on three sides). Shelves are let in into the walls on every side of the hall. In length they are of human height; in breadth three yards. They are painted and ornamented with gold. The books are arranged cross-ways on the shelves one over another. Each subject has its own shelf, and every shelf its own catalogue, where the books are minutely described. Only decent people have admission to the library".[1]

Not only did scholars study in the libraries, but, it seems, they were also used as lively meeting-places for men of culture and refinement, where learned discussions and debates took place.

In his *Maqamah* Hariri describes a scene in the library of the little town of Hulwan, where Abu Zaid, the peripatetic *litterateur*, finding a reader turning over the pages of the poetical collection of Abu Ubaida, uses the opportunity for a display of his talents in improvisation.

[1] Dr. Sprenger is of opinion that the Fihrist is a catalogue of one such library.

XVI

THE CALIPHATE: ITS DECLINE AND FALL

If we survey Muslim civilization in its entirety we shall notice, above everything else, the intimate connexion subsisting between it and the material conditions of its people and government.

Doubtless and clear emerges the fact that the high grade of civilization attained—a civilization which, on a superficial view, we are tempted to ascribe to intellectual forces at work—was mainly due to favourable social and economic conditions. The first condition of such a high civilization is the association of large groups of men in permanent habitations, and the confluence of material advantages to such established centres arising from such associations and leading to prosperity, refinement and luxury.

Large towns are the cradles of culture. What Mekka, Damascus and Baghdad stood for in the civilization of the Muslim Orient we have already shown.[1] They were the real homes of that wonderful efflorescence material and spiritual—never attained since in the East—which we call Arab, but which may be more correctly styled Saracenic, civilization. For although the Arabs founded the Caliphate and ruled the largest portion of the then world, capable of civilization, it was by no means the genuine Arabs who, single-handed, solved the great world-problem of history. The civilization of the Caliphate was pre-eminently the civilization of that mixed race, which arose in large towns, by the gradual amalgamation of the Arabs and the subject races.

The Arabic language dominated the whole empire, and served as a binding tie. It helped forward the circulation of ideas. It built up a literature which, for fulness and variety, excelled by far the literatures of Hellas and

[1] Khuda Bukhsh, *Orient under the Caliphs*, and Khuda Bukhsh, *Arab civilization*, Chapter V (Heffer & Sons, Cambridge).

Rome. Learned institutions, colleges, academies, libraries, observatories and hospitals arose in large towns, where intellectual efforts found warm and sponsoring support.

Already, under the first Abbasids, governors of some provinces had become semi-independent sovereigns; while those of others—founders of small dynasties—accepted, for a time, the shadowy overlordship of the Caliphs. But these, too, soon ruled in defiance and to the detriment of the Caliphs. This meant multiplication of the centres of intercourse, and this multiplication, or, more happily described, this process of disintegration, manifesting itself first in the outlying provinces, uninterruptedly continued.

While, at first, there was only a limited number of important towns, later we see their number increasing. With this multiplication of towns the Saracenic civilization secured greater and greater hold and diffusion.

How lively, in the hey-day of Islam, were the activities of the mind, and how engrossing was the passion for letters —what stimulating influence study and literature exercised over the peoples where the Arab conquerors firmly planted their standard and established their rule—is best evidenced by the fabulous rapidity with which their language, their literature, their poetry, their learning spread and struck root.

Next to Spain and Persia there is no other country which establishes so clearly this proposition as does Sicily. In an amazingly short time this island was largely Arabicized. In the towns—especially in Palermo, the seat of Arab government—a genuine Arab civilization (or, if you will, Saracenic civilization) blossomed forth, and Sicily quickly stepped forward with a creditable list of scholars and poets of her own. Many of these were of outstanding merit, and, in Arabic literature, are referred to as Sikilli, i.e. the Sicilians.

Thus a common civilization seemingly kept intact what politically had gone to pieces. It momentarily stemmed the rushing tide of decentralization. But, when we weigh the advantages and disadvantages, the scale inclines towards the latter.

True, many of the princes and feudal chiefs who from time to time arose fostered art and letters. Look, for instance, at the different rulers of the House of the Buyyids, individual caliphs of the Fatimide line, and other distinguished magnates besides.

In their capitals they founded big libraries, where many a learned man, away from the vortex of the world, peacefully carried on his studies. Did not Avicenna work in the great library of Bukhara ?

At the court of the rulers of Khwarizm lived the renowned Beruni, enjoying high favours and pursuing his researches into the specific gravity of the minerals. Another great scientist wrote for the Seljukian Sultan Sunjur (1117–1157) his "Scale of Wisdom"—a treatise which, carrying further the researches of Beruni, has, for its subject, the theory of weight and the construction of weighing instruments and machines intended for scientific purposes.

And numerous other works, composed at the instance of individual princes, or dedicated to them, attest the growth of literary and scientific activities amid advancing political decay and decentralization.

But we should not shut our eyes to the other side of the picture. The dynasties that so rapidly sprang up all over the Islamic countries could not endure for long. Their extinction was as sudden, and not infrequently as violent, as their rise. The dismemberment was steady and uninterrupted.

Nor must we forget that in the midst of large Sultanats [1] subsisted quite a number of independent or semi-independent statelets, ruled by rich baronial chiefs who, from their strongholds, drained the resources of the country around, and who, in perpetual feuds with each other, destroyed the well-being of the masses.

The national economic decay becoming more and more widespread, cultural movements shrank within ever narrowing circles.

True, the impoverishment and the social disorder, consequent upon it, became more and more clearly marked in later times, but the beginnings of this slow decline are not altogether unnoticeable in the earlier days.

However burdensome the taxes in the empire of the Caliphs, levied upon people of other faiths, yet the simplicity of the system and the absence of all hindrances to free intercourse (such as custom-duties, imposts and transit-charges) for a time promoted and enlivened trade, and fostered a brisk interchange of commodities. But, all too early, these

[1] Khuda Bukhsh, *Politics in Islam*, pp. 224 et sqq.

undoubted advantages were overclouded and nullified by religious and political faction-fights, which devastated entire provinces.

Without entering minutely into the details of political history, let us turn to that account which one of the earliest and best informed writers gives of Iraq, as it was, towards the end of the Omayyad period, in consequence of the bloody conflicts between different parties, and ceaseless wars between the Government troops and the Kharijites. Devastating epidemics descended in swift succession. Famine and scarcity played their dismal rôle. To these misfortunes were added the lawlessness of footpads, robbers, cutthroats. In the towns, says Jahiz, people were reduced to the necessity of consuming human flesh.[1]

These conditions, indeed, ended with the rise of the Abbasids, for they maintained order with a firm hand, and, through the wealth which poured into Baghdad and Samarra, and from there again into numerous other channels, they soon restored, in some measure, the prosperity and well-being of at least a portion of their empire.

But, despite all well-meaning efforts, pestilence and famine continually recurred. As this is a fact of especial importance, from the point of view of the history of civilization, I shall here give a list of *these*, collected from original sources. They suggest some interesting thoughts.

A.H.	A.D.	
17	638	Famine in Hijaz (Dhahabi).
18	639	The plague of Emmaus (Ta'un 'Amwas), spreading from Palestine to Syria and Iraq. Said to have claimed 25 000 victims. (Dhahabi, Ibn Athir).
50	670	Epidemic in Kufa (Ibn Athir, Ibn Taghribardi).
65	684–5	The so-called universal plague in Basra (Ta'un Garif, Ibn Athir).
66	685–6	Pestilence (Waba) in Egypt (Dhahabi).
69	688–9	General pestilence (Aghani, XI, 124, Ibn Kutaiba). Dhahabi also speaks of a pestilence in Basra.

[1] Jahiz, *Kitabul-Haiwan*, Fol. 67. 106. It seems that the band of cutthroats did their worst at the time of the insurrection of Mughira Ibn Sa'ad against the Omayyads, when, in Iraq, the greatest anarchy prevailed. Cf. Ibn Kutaiba, p. 300, who looks upon the band of cutthroats as the supporters of Abu Mansur-al-Kisf.

A.H.	A.D.	
79	698–9	Plague (Ta'un) in Syria. (Dhahabi, Ibn Athir, Ibn Taghribardi).
80	699–700	General pestilence in Syria, Iraq, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Hijaz (Masudi, V, 384).
86	705	Plague in Syria, Iraq, specially in the towns of Wasit and Basra (Ibn Kutaiba, Ibn Athir).
87	706	Plague in Basra (Ibn Athir).
100	718–9	Plague (Ibn Kutaiba).
107	725–6	Plague and cattle-plague in Syria (De Goeje, Frag., 89).
108	726–7	Plague in Syria (Ibn Athir).
114	732–3	Plague in Wasit (Ibn Athir).
115	733	Plague in Syria (Ibn Taghribardi).
116	734	Plague in Iraq, specially in Wasit (Ibn Taghribardi).
126	743–4	Plague (Ta'un) and epidemic (Waba) in Africa (Ibn Athir). According to Ibn Adary it began in 129 A.H., and lasted for seven years.
127	744–5	Plague in Syria (Ibn Taghribardi, I, 388).
130	747–8	Plague in Basra (Ibn Athir).
131	748–9	Plague in Basra (Ibn Taghribardi, Ibn Kutaiba).
134	751–2	Plague in Ra'i (Ibn Taghribardi, I, 347).
135	752–3	Plague in Syria (Ibn Kutaiba).
158	775	Epidemic (Waba)—Ibn Athir.
166	782–3	Basra (Goeje, Frag., I, 279).
167	783–4	Epidemic in Baghdad and Basra (Ibn Athir, Dhahabi).
197	812–3	Famine in Spain (Ibn Athir).
200	815–6	Epidemic in Baghdad and the Syrian deserts (Ibn Taghribardi, II, 188).
201	816–7	Famine in Ra'i, Ispahan and Khorasan (Ibn Athir).
207	822–3	Famine in Iraq (Ibn Athir).
232	846–7	Famine in Spain (Ibn Athir).
251–55	865–869	Famine in Spain (Ibn Athir).
258	871–2	Epidemic (Waba), Plague in the Tigris district, in Baghdad, Wasit and Samarra (Ibn Athir). Plague in Ahwaz and Iraq. Begins in Askar Mukram, spreads over the whole of the Euphrates Territory up to the Syrian borders as far as Karkisiyya (Hamza Ispahani, 190).

A.H.	A.D.	
260	873–4	General famine, plague (Ta'un), Epidemic (Waba) in Maghrib, Spain (Ibn Athir).
264	877–8	Plague in Khorasan and Kumis (Ibn Athir).
266	879–80	Famine in Africa. Scarcity in Hijaz, Iraq, Mosul, Jazira, Syria (Ibn Athir).
288	900–1	Plague in Adherbaijan (Ibn Athir, Dhahabi).
300	912–3	Epidemic in Baghdad and in the Syrian deserts (Ibn Taghribardi II, 243).
323	935	Famine in Khorasan (Ibn Athir).
324	936	Plague in Ispahan (Ibn Taghribardi, II, 280) and famine in Persia (Hamza Ispahani).
329	940–1	Epidemic and famine in Iraq.
330	941–2	Famine and epidemic in Iraq (Ibn Athir). Epidemic and famine in Baghdad (Dhahabi).
332	943–4	Famine in Baghdad (Ibn Athir).
334	945–6	Famine in Baghdad (Ibn Athir, Dhahabi, Ibn Taghribardy).
343	954–5	Great pestilence in Khorasan and Jibal (Ibn Athir).
344	955–6	Epidemic (typhoid) in Ispahan, Ahwaz and Baghdad (Hamza Ispahani).
347	958–9	Pestilence in Jabal (Ibn Athir).
358	968–9	Famine in Iraq (Ibn Athir), many inhabitants emigrate.
377	987–8	Great famine in Baghdad (Dhahabi).
382	992–3	Great famine in Baghdad.
395	1004–5	Pestilence and epidemic lasting till 396 A.H. (Ibn Adary, 267).
406	1015	Pestilence in Basra (Uyun-ul-Tawarikh, Fol. 8).

This list, however incomplete, is enough to enable us to draw important inferences. The striking fact, first and foremost to note, is that, of the 40 great epidemics which appeared in the course of four centuries, no less than 22—that is more than half—either began in or visited Iraq. Twelve times Syria was victimized, but North Arabia, which, to-day, is the hot-bed of cholera, appears but once as the scene of a great epidemic. In Iraq—pre-eminently in the town of Basra, situated at the mouth of the Tigris, and, next to it, at Kufa, Wasit, finally Baghdad—the pestilence raged oftenest and fiercest.

These epidemics have an important bearing on political conditions and, as such, on the social and economic interests resulting therefrom. The first great pestilence of the year 18 A.H. (635 A.D.) coincides exactly with the conclusion of the Syrian conquest. Fierce and wasteful were its ravages, for the loss of manhood meant neglect of land, which was left fallow and forlorn. Famine joined hands with epidemic; nay, with a veritable plague (Ta'un) which made its way even into Iraq. The Arab commanders—mindful of the health of the troops—forthwith removed them from their garrisons into the mountains and the deserts, until the plague was over.[1]

From the year 50 A.H. (670 A.D.) epidemics become violent and frequent. In fact they recur every ten years. Syria and Iraq are specially the scenes of their visitations. They come one after another until the middle of the second century of the Hegira, when we notice a longer interval. It is precisely at this time that, with the accession of the Abbasids, a series of fierce wars in Syria and Iraq come to an end (132 A.H.; 750 A.D.). To be absolutely precise, a pestilence does show itself in the years 134 and 135 A.H., but henceforth, until the beginning of the third century, the interval becomes distinctly longer. The struggle for the Caliphate between Mamun and his brother Amin, which was most ruthless in Iraq, and which led to a long siege of Baghdad, called forth epidemics there, as also in other parts of the empire. Famine and scarcity, henceforth, show themselves periodically at the capital of the Caliphate. But, throughout the whole of the third century of the Hegira, pestilence is conspicuously rare. With the beginning of the fourth century of the Hegira epidemics at Baghdad follow one another in swift succession, and, with them, the scourge of famine and its horrible accompaniments. This state of affairs is naught but infallible proof of far-reaching social and economic decay. Nor, as regards the general prosperity, must we overlook the catastrophic consequences resulting from the splitting up of the empire into numerous half-sovereign states. In the days of the single empire there were, of course, no customs-barriers. Commerce was everywhere free. The new states, however, began

[1] Ibn Athir, II, 237.

altering this. Customs and tolls were levied everywhere. This naturally hampered that free intercourse which had formerly rendered the empire so prosperous.

Even the smallest provincial dynasty strove to increase its revenue. New taxes were imposed, and consumption duties (mokus), unknown to the old Administrative Law of Islam, were levied. Also transit-tolls, thus hampering trade and raising prices. The rural population was mercilessly ground down to the dust. These ominous symptoms—common enough in all decaying communities—nowhere stand out so distinctly as they do in the history of the East.

A few examples will suffice.

The Aghlabides soon managed to convert the governorship of Africa into a hereditary kingship—independent of the Caliph—stopping even the annual tribute payable to Baghdad. Of a ruler of this dynasty we are told that he raised the land-tax to 18 dinars (180 francs) for every *feddan* of land—an amount wholly beyond the capacity of the tenants to pay.[1]

That elsewhere matters were no more cheerful is proved by a report regarding the Hamadanides who ruled North Syria and a portion of Mesopotamia. The town of Nisibin formed part of their dominion. Most happily situated in an exceedingly fertile plain—abundantly watered by neighbouring mountain springs and artificial canals—it possessed immense gardens, plantations and cultivable lands. Under early Arab rule the town largely retained its former prosperity, and numerous cloisters in its environs were uninterfered with. One hundred thousand dinars (about a million francs) was the tax payable to the Central Government. But in the year 360 A.H. a change took place. The Prince, within whose dominion Nisibin lay, so overloaded it with taxes and imposts that the Arab tribe of Banu Habib—quite a large body of men—despite the fact that they were related to the ruling Hamadanide family, resolved to migrate and take shelter in the Byzantine Empire. Thus, with their families, their cattle, their shining arms and weapons—riding on fine chargers—they left their homes

[1] Ibn Athir, vi, 231. The *feddan* in modern Egypt, is equal to 4,500 square-meters. This tax therefore meant 1 franc per every 25 square meters.

and went over to the Byzantine territory. Without one single exception they (some twelve thousand men) embraced the Christian faith. By kind treatment the Byzantine Emperor sought to attach them to him. To them, therefore, lands were granted, and concessions were made. To those that remained behind the migrants wrote of their good luck and kind treatment, with the result that many more joined them. To avenge the oppressions they had endured they undertook predatory expeditions in Muslim lands, and captured some important fortifications, such as Hisn Mansur, Hisn Ziyad, and besieged Ka'r-Tuta and Dara. Every year, at harvest time, these incursions were repeated. They went even as far as Nisibin and beyond, to Gazirat-i-Ibn Omar, Ras-al-'Ain, Balis, and further still.[1]

No further comment is necessary to bring home to the reader the importance of this information. Intolerable must have been the position to induce a whole tribe thus to abandon their home and to migrate to a foreign country; nay, even to change their faith—at a time, too, when Islam proudly looked down upon the degenerate Christianity of the Byzantines !

For those that remained behind still harder days dawned. The Hamadanide, Nasir-al-Dowlah, confiscated the lands of the migrants, took possession of most, partly by agreement and partly by force, and, instead of fruit, caused cereals, such as rice, cotton, etc., to be cultivated thereon. He put obstacles in the way of further migrations, and introduced the *Muqasamah* system, under which the land-produce was to be delivered either in kind or in gold as previously assessed.

Our informant, who speaks his own mind, adds : " Worse still was the position of the Nisibins under the son of this prince, for the capricious taxation and division of the produce mostly consumed the harvest, leaving nothing more than was just enough to eke out a sorrowful existence."

To show that this was not an isolated case, but merely an instance of the many methods of financial exploitation in fashion, I shall cite a passage from the diary of the Spanish traveller, Ibn Jubair, who relates, with indignation, how the pilgrims, on their arrival in Alexandria, were cruelly oppressed by the Egyptian customs-officers. He tells us that,

[1] Ibn Haukal, Fol. 140. The text is badly damaged.

even before they disembarked, Government officers boarded the ship, took down the names of every single pilgrim, and mercilessly exacted the poor-tax (zakat) from them. Then they brought the pilgrims and their luggage to land, and most minutely examined everything. In the confusion that ensued many of these unfortunates lost their belongings. He adds that the just Saladin who then ruled Egypt would surely have ended these malpractices had he been informed of them. In another passage he tells us that this very prince actually removed the pilgrim-tax which was formerly collected in the harshest manner at Aidab, the seaport on the Red-Sea, whence the pilgrims embarked for Jedda. This tax meant $7\frac{1}{2}$ Egyptian *dinars* per head—about 75 francs. He who was unable to pay suffered the cruellest punishment. Even in other places pilgrims were systematically exploited, and were looked upon as welcome objects of taxation.

Happy exceptions there may have been. Thus a traveller [1] describes the kingdom of the Samanides in the most flattering terms. Whether or no personal motives played any part in this transaction, such an exception—if exception there was—was very rare. In most of the towns that grew up under the shadow of the Caliphate the very worst feature of the art of Government came prominently to light, namely, extortion of money without any regard to the interest or welfare of the people, and the squandering of money, so extorted, in unprofitable directions.

Nothing is more frequent in the geographies of later times, when a town is mentioned, than the addition of the words: *It is now for the most part desolate and in decay.* The taxes were collected with pitiless severity. Such as fell into arrears had to carry heavy stones round their necks, or to stand for hours in the scorching sun, or to suffer tortures in other equally cruel ways.[2]

The magnates of the Empire abused their position in boundless profiteering. They either took leases of entire districts from the Government, and systematically drained and impoverished them, or they carried on usurious trade

[1] Ibn Haukal, 341.

[2] Compare the fiscal oppressions in the Byzantine Empire. Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders*, Vol. III, 615–616; Vol. IV, 29–30; 407; 427–30.

in corn, thereby raising the prices of food-stuffs. The military fiefs did the rest in ruining the prosperity of the masses.

With this continually augmenting economic decay another factor kept pace—a sure sign of social sickliness. More and more, with the passing years, the race, which had founded and maintained the Empire, lost its old sense of nationality. Precisely in the same ratio as the Arab towns-folk lost their old tribal virtues, there awoke in the conquered peoples—notably in the Persians—a national movement directed against Arab rule and the Arabic language. This movement—helping on decentralization and the break-up of the Muslim Empire—first began in the courts of the Eastern dynasties—the Samanides and the Ghaznavids. Firdausi's epic is the clearest indication of this new, awakening spirit, which soon laid its spell over the whole of Persia—gradually displacing the Arab element and eventually securing the defection of the Eastern lands of the Caliphate.

The more wretched the position of those Muslims who were still under the direct rule of the Caliphs, the more noticeable also became the general political demoralization. People lost their sense of duty to the State, and the rulers, equally so, towards the ruled. Shining examples of heroic self-sacrifice for their country's cause—such as Greek and Roman antiquity furnish—are, indeed, rare in history; for an unwavering sense of duty to the State and the community is only possible and conceivable among a highly cultured people. And such glorious instances are not absent among the Arabs! Only, this lofty sense of duty was closely woven with religious mentality—the Muslim State being as much a religious as a political institution. Therefore religious enthusiasms and patriotic sentiments were inseparably wedded in Islam. The Arab warrior of the first century who fought undaunted unto death for his people and his faith was swayed equally by religious sensibility and old-inherited national pride.

Such incomparable forces are as important for the continuance as for the material prosperity of the State. Neither the one nor the other can be done away with. But gradually these forces slackened and spent themselves. As a direct consequence of contact with foreigners national pride vanished, leaving naught but the religious tie as the one

and only bond uniting the immense brotherhood of Islam. But lively intellectual activities, rise of religious sects, disturbing doubts and scepticism, political chaos—these loosened *even* this one remaining tie—the religious tie of a common faith. Naught but *vis inertiae* now sustained the Empire.

Religion degenerated into superstition and fanaticism, stifling intellectual activity and spiritual life. The masses became more and more callous and apathetic to the commonweal, and the Empire of the Caliph dissolved into countless fragments. Of these only a few possessed vigour or vitality.

Not until the crusades is the dormant spirit of Islam again stirred to its depths. Aroused and aflame, it asserts itself in wild fury against the Christians—uniting, in a common cause, under the impulse of religious fervour, some of the scattered Muslim powers. But, effected under external pressure, this momentary return to vitality disappeared with the reasons that had brought it into being. Lacking all intellectual stimulus, and bereft of all political vitality, the Muslim world henceforward continues in a morbid listlessness, while the State-fabric of the Caliphate slowly but surely crumbles into dust.[1]

Thus ends Arab civilization!

[1] Arnold's *Caliphate*, Oxford, 1924.

XVII

JUST HUMAN

Of all the delightful books of essays that I have read within recent years the most delightful is *Dr. Frank Crane's Just Human.* These little essays are literary gems. They are considered verdicts on life and its varied phases. They are shrewd, penetrating criticisms of man's wayward ways. They ripple with laughter. They flash with wit and humour, but with all their seeming gaiety we hear the subdued sighs and sense the suppressed tears of humanity. They are all this and more. They administer gentle rebuke to man's vanity; they inculcate the pursuit of goodness for goodness sake. No new doctrine to be sure, but one, which needs constant re-iteration, for it is so apt to fall into neglect and oblivion.

"As a matter of fact it is love unrequited that is noblest love, charity that is abused that is the finest, and friendship which persists even after proofs of ungratefulness and treachery that does us most credit."

And again;

"Love is not love that must be paid. Love is not love that asks. True love desires only to give. The only tragedy of love is that it cannot give enough."

And once again:

"Trust! it is no disgrace to be betrayed. It is only a slap to your vanity. Be generous! you may be ridiculed for it, but your soul will be blessed though your heart is pained. Alas! it is in the highest motions of the spirit that we are after all most cowardly. To be ashamed to be good is far worse than being ashamed to be bad."

It is the voice of the Prophets of yore that we hear in these precepts and warnings. And are not such precepts and warnings sorely needed in these days of lust and greed, of hate and blood-thirst? Dr. Crane is a fine critic, and an uncompromising apostle of goodness, and in both capacities he stands high. To lift your voice in the cause of goodness; to stand forward as a preacher of disinterestedness; to

combat the evil tendencies of yovr age; to put your finger on the vices and corruptions of your people; to plead for mercy for man's deficiency in virtue and his sinful ways; to know his weaknesses, and to make allowances for the temptations that waylay and entrap him; to fearlessly express your views, regardless of favours or frowns—are these not priceless qualities? Do they not endear the author of these essays to those who love courage, truth, simplicity, directness?

"Charity, humility, grandeur of spirit, come from the knowledge of ourselves.

When you say that Jesus "knew what was in man" you need not add that he was kind and forgiving. Beautiful thought! Sublime thought!—thought that points to many hours of silent thinking; to many years of mature experience.

This, in short, is a fascinating book. It will appeal to youth, for it deals with the glowing enthusiasms of youth. It will appeal to middle age, for it portrays its struggles, its alternating hope and despair. It will appeal to old age, for it emphasises old age's supreme gifts—mellow views, a serene outlook, the end of storm and stress.

In reading this charming little volume I was deeply impressed by one fact—the striking similarity of its views to those of the Eastern poets, thinkers and philosophers. This similarity is not to be set down to plagiarism, but to the fact that the source of human thought is the human heart, which despite changing centuries and fast-fading conventions remains, for ever, the same, East and West, they say, will never meet. Is this true? Is there a dividing barrier between them enduring to the end of time? Whatever may be the case in other spheres, in the domain of letters, there is an unmistakable kinship of soul, an affinity at once indivisible and whole between the East and the West. And why? Because humanity is but one humanity, and its joys, sorrows, travails, sufferings, highest hopes, dearest efforts, cherished aspirations—they are precisely the same here as elsewhere, and this has been so since the sun has shone on earth and the moon has shed its gentle beams on the toiling sons of man. Hence the irresistible, eternal charm of Homer, Horace, Shakespeare, Omar Khayyam! Does the dividing line of nationality sever or segregate them? They are the proud possession of humanity at

large. This supreme fact cannot be too often impressed, inculcated, emphasised; especially, in our days of growing racial hatred, communal strife. The citizenship of the Commonwealth of Letters is open to all without let or hindrance. Thence at least will the true light ever shine—the light which will chase error away, dissipate misunderstanding and effect the union of man and man.

These reflections were forcibly borne in upon me by this little book of essays.

Read the essay on "God." Here in a couple of pages we are introduced to Plutarch, Aristotle, Seneca, Dumas and De Tocqueville.

"He is that disposing Mind that sits in the circle of the Heavens and manages the universe." "He is within each consciousness." "He is what every man feels himself, ought to be like. Hence He is the judge of all men. He is the one thought, without which all our other thoughts are in confusion. He is the essential order of things."

Turn to the mystic poets of Persia—Rumi, Sana'i, Jami—are they not full of these thoughts? Does not the East shake hands with the West on the intellectual platform, and shake hands as an equal and a worthy ally of ancient lineage?

What stir has Omar made in the West? What love, devotion, passionate adoration is his? And yet Omar is not an acknowledged Prince of poets in the East.

What priceless treasures lie buried in Eastern literature, none but those who know the Eastern languages can divine. The more these treasures are brought to light, the clearer will grow the sense of kinship and affinity of soul between the East and West. And this indeed, not only in the sweet, rapturous lyrics of the poets but in the subtle thoughts of the philosopher, and the serious, exacting mentality of the scientist. Then a new world will be revealed—a world in which Ghazali will extend a cordial hand to Descartes as his unconscious disciple; a world in which Darwin will meet his Arab forerunners of the IXth century; in which the *literati* of all ages will acknowledge and proclaim their kinship and common descent. Such a world only learning can create, and those that help in the creation of this world are the true benefactors of humanity.

And such a one is doubtless Dr. Frank Crane.

XVIII

WITHERED LEAVES

Time takes them home that we loved, fair names and famous,
To the soft long sleep, to the broad sweet bosom of death.
But the flower of their souls he shall not take away to shame us,
Nor the lips lack song for ever that now lack breath.
For with us shall the music and perfume that die not dwell,
Though the dead to our dead bid welcome, and we farewell.

Swinburne.

In the modest collection of my books there is one I fondly cherish. It is a Persian MS—neatly and elegantly written by a very dear friend of mine—cut off in the prime of life by the hand of death. It is entitled "Withered Leaves"—a name suggestive of its contents. It is my friend's *Reminiscences*. I would be nearer the truth were I to describe it as his *Autobiography*, interspersed with shrewd and sagacious criticisms on life and letters; thoughtful judgments on contemporary events; life-like portraits of public and private personalities. It is an entirely human document—bright, vivid, alternating with light and shade. For is not life a strange compound of joy and sorrow, light and darkness, success and disappointments? The MS. was made over to me by my friend's executors—a month after the grave had closed upon him. Here is a copy of the covering letter—the last that my friend penned. "To you I make over this MS., with full liberty to publish it *in extenso* or in parts, to keep it back for the present, or to destroy it for evermore. It is placed in your hands, with full power to deal with it as you please. You have known me as no one else has known me on this earth, and you are by far the best judge of its contents. There is no accent of untruth, no affectation, no make-believe in these pages. It is a correct, ungarbled report of my thoughts, my feelings, my activities. I have set them down, not because I have flattered myself into the belief that they were worthy of enduring record, but

because it helped me in beguiling the tedium of existence. Should you think that they are likely to interest others—withdraw not that pleasure from them. But *you* are the sole judge, and your judgment is final, without appeal. I have nothing more to add. Farewell! The Night cometh and I hear a Voice calling me hence."

This little note—so unaffected in its simplicity, so touching in its directness—at once awoke in me a long train of melancholy thoughts.

> "I wept as I remembered how often he and I had tired the Sun with talking and sent him down the sky."

The past unrolled itself before my mental vision.

> A bird bills the selfsame song,
> With never a fault in its flow,
> That we listened to here those long
> Long years ago.
>
> —But it's not the selfsame bird—
> No! perished to dust is he . . .
> As also are those who heard
> That song with me.

I recalled my first meeting with him, many many years ago, in a *moffussil* school-room. The whole scene seemed—as fresh as though it were but of yesterday. I remembered him sitting next to me in the class—a shy, sensitive child, keen-eyed and alert in mind, and with a grace and gentleness at once singular and striking. We were friends before we parted at the end of the first day. There our life-long friendship began. We became inseparables, and so unto the end we remained. It was a delightful companionship. The Ganges flowed by the school compound, and it was our unfailing joy to sit on its bank and watch the silvery stream, the sapphire sky, the soft-gliding sailing boats, the setting sun, the descending darkness, the unbroken peace and quiet, and the solemn silence softening, soothing, pervading all. For hours we sat there—happy, speechless—banqueting on nature's pure delights. Our whole school-life was one unclouded dream. Mornings were spent in preparing lessons; day at the school; afternoons and evenings in contemplation of nature, and after dusk at the Library.

After sundown my father invariably retired there, and we children followed him. It was a sanctuary of Erudition. Books, discussions on books, and learned talk enlivened with poetical quotations, were the usual fare. This was the uninterrupted, never varied routine, from one end of the year to the other.

Stupendous was my friend's memory, and before he left school it was richly stored with poetical quotations from the earliest to the most modern of the Persian poets. In after life his conversation was a brilliant literary feast. Fine, chiselled sentences flowed in swift succession—natural, effortless, unstudied. Choice anecdotes, appropriate quotations, ironic touches, wit, humour, levity, learning: all these flashed, sparkled, shone—holding the audience thrilled and spellbound.

The MS. before me is itself proof of his finished scholarship in Persian, and his wide reading in European, literature. School days having ended, he came to Calcutta to prosecute his studies. His devotion to the City of Palaces was almost romantic. It was always a wrench for him to leave it, even for a day. Poor soul! What agony did he suffer! What grief and torture during his self-imposed exile for a year from this superb city. If Calcutta yielded to any city in his esteem and love, it was to Oxford—his beloved University which he never could love too well. Let us hear his own words: "Calcutta", says he, "was the scene of my happy College days, when no cloud marred life's horizon and no storm ruffled life's placidity. Not College days alone! Here, too, on my return from Europe, I nursed golden dreams which have receded and faded with the march of time. Ah, but here too, I have snatched many a moment of unalloyed joy from annihilation's waste! Here, too, I have forged romantic friendships, which sweetened and lightened life's weary path. Here, too, I have struggled and fought against heavy odds, with but occasional gleams of victory—only gleams—for victory clear, conclusive, complete, has never been my lot, never a prize within my grasp. Woven are here the associations of childhood, manhood, declining age; and dear, thrice dear, is their memory to me. To one city only—far-famed, aglow with light, crowned with the diadem of learning, steeped in hoary traditions, linked with heart-stirring romances—thou yieldest

in my love and esteem. It is Oxford—that supremely glorious city—which I have so often longed with a yearning, passionate longing to revisit. Oft have I wondered whether it would ever be my lot to walk again within its sacred precincts; to see with the eyes of old age those haunts where youth and joy and love never for one instant betrayed, deserted, parted company with each other. For seven ecstatic years Oxford was my fondly-adored home. Straightway I fell in love with its classic atmosphere, its learned surroundings, its leisured air, its striking liberalism, its wondrous opportunities for culture and refinement, its unfailing hospitality, its ineffable charm. I threw myself unreservedly into the arms of that universally beloved city of Minerva, where light and learning, happily wedded, hold unquestioned sway. Of learning I could not have enough. Who ever can? It is a passion which grows and grows, more and more. Time, which wrecks all, leaves this unwrecked. It defies time and age, and rises triumphant over them both. But, ah! Oxford not only opened the door of Learning to me and guided me into its many-chambered palace: it also introduced me —youthful, inexperienced—to that Sovereign Lady—the presiding *déesse* of youth, the controlling mistress of manhood, the consoling companion of old Age—Love.

What a sweet, sad thing is love—especially Love at first sight! Who can describe its joy and its pain? It is a crisis of the soul. I shall not attempt a description of those tense days and sleepless nights when hope waxed and waned; when laughter and tears held alternate sway over my heart; when life was either beautiful sunshine or weeping gloom. My ineffable and sublime! Heaven was on her lips, and joy in her eyes. In those long summer evenings, in surroundings fair and poetical, we met and walked and talked: and unceasing was our talk—for lovers' talk never hath an end. Even now—so vivid is my recollection—I remember the anxiety with which I scanned the sky and nervously watched the clouds, lest the unexpected rain might rob me of my walk and the soul-entrancing talk. Happy, gloriously happy, were those days when love was young, and hope was bright, and life was seen through the lens of supreme enticing joy. It was a world far from ours, alas! Where music and moonlight and feeling were one inseparable whole. Two-fold, then, was Oxford's gift to me, no temporary, but

an enduring, gift: Love and Learning—Sweetness and Light."

I have given but a fragment of the story of my friend's Oxford life and Romance. It may aptly be described as a page torn from the Arabian Nights. Some day the entire text and translation may be given to the world: and, I am confident it will not be an unwelcome addition to the library of serious literature. This little Persian MS. is rich in thought, rich in romance, rich in criticisms on life and letters.

Its perusal revived in me many distant and faded memories; stirred up old dreams; recalled old hopes and fears; for he and I were bosom friends. No human eye—except his or mine—has scanned these leaves, and no human hand —other than ours—has turned its pages. It is a sacred legacy to me and in that light I have always looked upon it and dealt with it.

Never, to my knowledge, was any one more misunderstood than he. His gay talk, his ringing laughter, his easy manners, absence of all restraint, and freedom from all reservations, were not infrequently mistaken for a want of seriousness. But nothing could be further from the truth. His writings, which are numerous, are all and without exception serious, indeed sad. His outward gaiety was but a means of escape and shelter from his brooding melancholy. In spite of company—in spite of mirth and merriment—he was intensely lonely, intensely sad at heart. What made him so? Life and the view that he took of life. He looked upon it as a growing renunciation; a continuing disenchantment; a funeral procession of hope, of love, of ambition, of all that is dear and near to one's heart. He faced the realities of life, faced them without fear. And what is pessimism, but facing the realities of life? He was steeped in melancholy, and was always deep in gloomy thoughts. Verily, did he seem to revel in the Luxury of Woe! Out of his library, however, he ever strove to shake himself free from this empire of gloom and to rid himself of this haunting melancholy. Hence the contrast between his depressing writings and his sunny talk.

Here is a passage to the point: "Know thyself. This was one of the Socratic maxims of life, and how true and wise it was. Man not only deceives others: he deceives himself too. He wears a mask, not only for the outer world, but

also for the exacting world within himself. He exaggerates his powers. He miscalculates his strength. He overrates his virtues, and ignores his vices. If successful, he fancies himself the greatest of God's creation ; and if unsuccessful, the most injured of mortals. True appreciation of self, realisation of one's limitations, candid admission of failure, cheerful acceptance of facts, charity, forgiveness—how rare in life ! Know thyself ! How difficult the task ! And infinitely more difficult to know others ! And yet fluent and facile and swift are we in judging and condemning others ! Should Mercy, the twin-born of Justice—should Mercy, with Justice, be dethroned, dishonoured, expelled from the world's judgment seat ? I shudder to think it ; but facts, indubitable facts, point thereto."

And again : " One thing I have always cheerfully followed and loyally obeyed—the directions of my heart. I have never been at pains to consult, or to defer to, the wishes of others. My heart has been my one, constant guide. To its promptings I have invariably hearkened. Its commands I have never disobeyed. For why should I stifle its yearning, or crush its cravings ? No one lives twice, outliving his day. Dear heart ! thou art the custodian of my joys and sorrows—my unceasing companion by day and night ; my kindly light unto death."

The MS. begins thus : " The Goddess of Learning blessed my cradle, and the good fairies brought to me their varied gifts. But rich and rare though these gifts were, the supremest of all—success in life—they forget to bring and to bestow upon me. And hence success has never attended my efforts—strive as I will. I have always seen hope dangle before me, but its fulfilment never. Dreams have floated before my vision—golden, glittering, beckoning dreams—but the dawning day has always chased them away, out of reach, out of sight. I am a cenotaph of frustrated hopes and wasted destinies. In my younger days I was wont to chafe, repine, silently grieve : but all that is past and over now. I have made peace with fate, and have accepted *Resignation* and *Renunciation* as the two cardinal tenets of my faith. And they have given me peace, contentment, serenity, strength, fortitude, courage. Disappointment has now no longer any significance for me ; success no meaning either. Life to me is an endless succession

of metamorphoses leading up to that final terrestrial change—misnamed death. For is not death but a portal, a tempering process, through which we must needs pass on our way to Perfection's goal?

> "Let me enjoy the world no less
> Because the all-enacting Might
> That fashioned forth its loveliness
> Had other aims than my delight.'"

This is a fine passage, in complete accordance with my own views, and, I doubt not, with the views of many others who have gone through life with their eyes open and ears not shut. Do we not find the same sentiments echoing through the ages in our eastern literature? *Vanitas Vanitatum*! Death and Dust! Perchance a purer, happier life beyond! Hope! Why should we forsake hope? Is not hope a relief, a consolation, a rock in the sea of uncertainty? I rejoice that there was at least this little ray of light which illumed and cheered our author's path. But ah! are there not millions on this fair earth to whom even *hope* is a mockery in their life of perpetual warfare with adverse fate? What about these weary toilers of the earth? One lesson life continually brings home to me—"Envy not others: for many many are envious of thee." And if we were to look upon life in this spirit—much of our imagined misery would vanish, and a great deal of real misery would soften, abate, and lose its bitterness. To me the temptation of quoting from this MS. is almost irresistible. Thackeray has somewhere said: I hope I shall always like to hear men, in reason, talk about themselves. What subject does a man know better? And here the man who is talking about himself is one lavishly endowed by nature, and rich with all the gifts of civilization.

Here is a purely personal passage—refreshing in its candour and frankness.

"Youth and its generous uncalculating ardour! Ah, how memory turns to those days of untarnished joy! 'Restore, O God, the dreams of youth, and fulfil a tithe of them.' Often and often I sat with my father, surrounded by books, unfolding to him schemes of future activity. I spoke of my design to attempt a 'History of Islam,' and

he encouraged me in my ambition. He stimulated my passion for study, and loved to dwell upon the true student's ideal, which scorned delights and lived laborious days. I was provided with books—for there never was any scarcity of books at home—and in my hours of freedom my favourite resort was our library. I read with a consuming passion, and heard literary subjects discussed with unslaked curiosity. Fresh from an Indian College to an English University, I breathed there the very atmosphere of learning. I enjoyed the society of the most cultivated and talented of men. There, in that congenial company, hope soared higher and yet higher, and ambition kept pace with hope. I determined to carry out my boyish resolution; and, with that end in view, I set about equipping myself for the task. I read history. I studied it under that sweetest and kindest of teachers—alas! now, no more—Mr. T. A. Archer—familiar to all students of mediæval lore. It was more than a tutor's interest that he took in me. Not only did he help me on in my studies with generous unstinted help. He prepared me fully for the task to which I proposed to address myself; namely, the authorship of an *Islamic History*. Original research he regarded, and insisted upon, as an integral part of University education. He argued that a student should not only keep himself abreast of current scholarship, but should go to the very fountain-head—original sources. For only thus can he receive the proper training and the necessary discipline for sound historical work in after-life. The study of original authorities, he contended, was of incalculable service, and its neglect of catastrophic consequence to the student. It called forth, said he, all the necessary qualifications needed for historical work: discretion, judgment, method. It taught the art of seizing upon the essentials in the overwhelming abundance of details. It quickened the intellect; it ensured self-confidence; it formed and matured style. In short, it brought critical powers into full play. Above all, he held that we should not be content merely to restate the ideas of others. We should have ideas of our own. Under his loving guidance I passed through all this training and made myself ready for the task. But disappointment has ever dogged my footsteps. The entrancing dream that I so proudly nursed vanished with my Oxford days. I was flung into the vortex

of life—not to edify the world with historical studies, but to keep body and soul together in a mere heart-breaking, soul-deadening struggle for existence. Farewell to thee—O happy dream—now mine no more. Were I a Christian, were I without those duties and obligations which chain me to mother-earth, I would have retired to a monastery to pursue my studies, to fulfil my destiny. For whatever it is not—the monastic life is certainly a haven of calm to those who shrink from the pollutions and perils of the civil state, and its transient joy. But *even that* is not to be. Hence these tears! Unbidden they flow. Cease, O tears, for never will ye deflect Fate from its destined course, or vary its decree."

Let me now pass on to his religious views, which were not only free from bias and taint of prejudice, but were marked with generous liberalism. He could not understand that spirit of antagonism which one religion displays towards another; nor could he endure, for an instant, malice, hatred, ill-will, disfiguring the relationship which ought to subsist between the professors of differing religions.

"Religion," said he, "is a purely personal matter between man and his Creator. It is too lofty and sacred to be dragged into the forum and the market-place. The human heart is its temple; human gratitude, its prayer; love, its binding tie; and good-will towards all its fairest flower and fruit."

And is it not, after all, the very same goal that all religions seek—to announce to the sunk, self-weary man—Thou must be born again! Why then this wrangle? Why this ever-recurring struggle and bloodshed which wrecks God's peace and brings Satan's sway on earth?"

> "He prayeth best, who loveth best
> All things both great and small;
> For the dear God who loveth us
> He made and loveth all."

Though he always disclaimed acquaintance with politics and never, to my knowledge, took any part in it, yet his views were sound, and showed signs of careful thought. When I say he did not take part in politics—I mean active part; for instance, he joined no meeting, wore no colours, belonged to no party, and espoused no cause. I do not,

for one moment, suggest that he was not seriously interested in his country's weal or in his country's future. In fact he was keenly, vitally interested. I always heard him say, and say with emphasis, that popular will, clearly, freely, continually expressed, was the one and the only safe-guard in politics; nay, the only means of securing and attaining permanence for politics and promoting good in any people with any chance or hope of lasting success. But popular will, said he, was not popular caprice—no mere passing whim, or epidemic of unreason—but *will* formed, forged, founded on an intelligent appreciation of the problems of statesmanship, and serious considerations of the pressing problems of the day. It needs training, and training needs time. He found a visionary spirit and a feeling of impatience in his countrymen. They were far too prone, thought he, to measures, ill-considered, premature, over-hasty. "Unstable as water thou shalt not excel! Faith, perseverance, courage, eye steadfastly set towards the goal, neither fleeting triumph elating, nor momentary reverse depressing, the spirits—these are the qualities which make for success, in private no less than in public life. And are these not the very qualities which we so singularly lack? Impatience! Can you build up a nationality in a decade or two? Is it not the silent work of many centuries—the resultant of countless causes co-operating with each other through the ages? This feeling of impatience, this spirit of the visionary, he contended, was fraught with fatal consequences. It will stir hopes foredoomed to failure; and failure will leave our countrymen broken, bruised, crushed, incapable of effort, bereft of sunshine, plunged in depression. Progress—sure and secure—is ever slow and cautious. History inculcates this truth, and we must loyally and whole-heartedly accept it. India is astir with new life; aflame with lofty aspirations. We see clouds on the horizon, and hear, as it were, mutterings of a distant storm. But I doubt not that the clouds and the storm will pass away, leaving an atmosphere clearer, a horizon serener, prospects brighter, ties more strengthened, and loves more closely-knitted together than before. May India's be the conception of truth as an end to be pursued for its own sake—a conception essentially allied with freedom, and opposed alike to *anarchy* and to *blind obedience*."

In another place he says: "I love to watch the game of

politics from my study window. There, in a tranquil atmosphere, I see things in their true aspect, their correct proportions. No warmth of partisanship; no blinding light of self-interest either. I watch as a distant spectator, a student of history. It is a wondrous game—this game of politics. Often and often personal ambition masquerades in the spotless robe of purity, and gross personal interest stalks abroad in the charming guise of self-effacing patriotism. I have known many of the chief actors in the scene. I have seen them bedeck and bejewel themselves before making their *début* on the stage. I have seen them without rouge and powder. I have seen them as they really are. I have known the springs of their action—their secret motives, their appalling disguises. I have discerned their *character*, as distinguished from their *reputation*. Confiding Public—too simple and trustful to probe beneath the surface of things! What sports you are of cunning, of falsity, of faithlessness."

The MS. abounds in wise reflections. The author knew what he was talking about, and time has added force and weight to his observations. I shall risk one more quotation. "Who will dare deny the gifts which English rule has conferred on India? To the English India owes its political awakening; its intellectual advancement; its commercial progress, its ordered government and rule of law. Rich gifts are these, and eternal be our thanks to the givers. But the entire work of the Englishman in the East is spoiled by his social aloofness and racial pride. This might have had its uses when he was regarded—as undoubtedly he was some thirty years ago—as a heaven-sent messenger to set the ruined world right and to bring good things to the world so set right. The divinity, that hedged him in then, enhanced his importance, strengthened his prestige, and made him a ruler unquestioned. But the lapse of a generation has brought fierce assaults upon his divinity. The laurel, the palm, and the paean are not *exclusively* his. Indians have been to Europe, competed with him in open competition, worked with him side by side, shouldered the burden of Government with him, seen him at close quarters at home and abroad. The glamour is gone. The vaunted superiority is no longer an unchallenged fact. The quondam Gods have descended from their mists and clouds to mix with mortals of ordinary clay. And the discovery—that the quondam Gods are but men of like

passions with ourselves—has dissolved the spell which held Indians in thrall—and has dissolved it for evermore. Prestige stands now no longer, as it did in days of yore, in undimmed splendour. Times change and we must change with Time. Compromise! Is not compromise an unerring guide that holds aloft the torch showing the true path to peace and salvation?"

It seems as though he had lifted the veil of futurity and clearly seen what was in store. Curious forebodings of events which, within recent times, have stirred India to its depths! His criticisms are apt, just, penetrating. They are an instructive commentary on the happenings of the last three or four years. Want of training, want of discipline, want of calculation and forethought, impatience, haste, rashness, blunder, palpable and egregious—are these not the dominant features of the political movements of our times? But, to be sure, they have not been altogether without good results. They mark a step forward in the political march. They have vindicated—beyond all cavil and doubt—the capacity of the Indians for wide effective organization and whole-hearted co-operation. They have wiped away the reproach (if ever such a reproach was just) that the Indians were not bold and fearless—ready to face pillory, prison, gallows for their political faith and political ideals. They have acclaimed and established that ideas are stronger, more enduring than the sword. And they have borne splendid testimony to the truth, undisputed and indisputable historic truth, that no Government, however powerful, can resist the unanimous demand or set its face against the unanimous will of a really developed people. "Our entire work in the East," says the *Nation* and the *Athenaeum*, "is at stake. We cannot save it by resistance and repression, nor yet by a surrender after repression, as in Ireland. We can, we believe, save it by an *honourable pact loyally observed*" (March 18th, 1922, p. 885). Sir Valentine Chirol's letter to the *Times* is also instructive reading on this point. (*Mail*, Wednesday, September 20th, 1922, p. 599).

I have not referred to the illuminating literary criticisms which are so plentiful in this MS., nor have I given any extract from those vivid and charming contemporary portraits which enliven and lighten its otherwise serious pages. Considerations of space forbid extensive extracts or exhaustive

quotations. But to pass them completely over would be painful to me and perhaps disappointing to my readers.

In his portrait gallery we meet in masks almost all the prominent men of his day, but in easily recognisable masks. We encounter Mr. Chameleon, Mr. Vainglory, Mr. Inordinate Vanity, Mr. Free Hobnob, Mr. Keep-off-the-Grass, Mr. Busy-with-nothing, Professor Never-Smile, Principal Dreamer, and last but not least the learned Dr. Bulbulla Samarqandi, and we encounter them just as we would encounter them in life. Perfect is the portrait of the Doctor—fine, flawless.

"Dr. Bulbulla Samarqandi was a rare human curio, of a unique type. Nature, after fashioning him, destroyed the mould. And nature was unerring in its instinct. Imagine this small world of ours with two such men! The thought is inconceivable—terrible. The world's strife—already bitter and venomous—would have been a thousand-fold intensified, and the chaos, threatening to engulf us all, would long ago have enveloped us in its impenetrable gloom."

The dominant trait of the Doctor was jealousy, and it ruled him with a fierce, frenzied rule. He was jealous of the sun because it illumined the world; he was jealous of the moon because it bathed the lovers in love and romance; he was jealous of a perambulating child because some day it might rival or outshine him; he was jealous of his friends because they might dispute his supremacy in his exclusively own kingdom of *humbuggism*; and malevolent whispers suggest that he was even jealous of his very dear parents because they brought forth so peerless a son. Poor Doctor! victim of jealousy so absorbing, so complete.

"His religion sat very lightly on him. He would hug Islam if it led him to the path of glory or of gold. He would bow, in reverent devotion, to the Brahmanic rule, if the Brahmanic rule held out hopes of a tempting salary or a sinecure post.

"Busy, busy he always seemed, but what with, the Devil alone knew. The Devil was his unwavering companion, his *Fidus Achates*; God a casual acquaintance. Not infrequently I discerned a devilish *schadenfreude* gleam in his fine big eyes, and devilish hatred and malice peer through his acts and speech. But, poor dear, how I pity you. You tried all the arts and stratagems to compass your end, but in vain! You tried politics; you flirted with law; you set yourself up as

a theologian ; you kissed the feet of the great ; you humbled, humiliated yourself, you grovelled in the dust, and all for a passing position, a phantom goal. *Vanitas Vanitatem !*

" I shall never forget your tears and lamentations at your failure and your defeat. Did you not bewail, in overflooding tears, the mockery of fate and the inefficiency of flattery ? A disappointed man was he—disappointed with life, love, flattery, the world, and himself !

" But disappointment did not completely crush him. He tried yet another avenue to success—the Old World avenue. He claimed the Seal of Prophetship. He stood out before the world as the latest Messenger of God who had strayed away from his destined path, but had at last discovered his real vocation, his true mission. But, alas ! he came too late to catch the ear of a heathen world—grown weary of prophets and scornful of the terrors of hell. This hope too died away for the doctor, and there was nothing left for him but to submit to the inevitable—failure and despair.

" Rest now, in thy obscurity, dear deluded Knight of the Devil—rest in peace until the dust, thou grovelledst in, claims thy weary, worn body, and death stills thy restless, agitated soul."

His sketches are not only brilliant literary performances : they are distinctive of his powers as a satirist. He wielded a trenchant blade, and when he dealt a blow it left its victim writhing, prostrate, pitilessly exposed, mercilessly chastised.

I must not indulge in further quotations ; tempting though it be. Every one of these sketches has a special flavour of its own. Wit in one, irony in another, rapier-thrust in the third—they are all sparkling little gems.

I shall now conclude with one small extract regarding Persian poetry. Dear, ever dear to him was Persian poetry. He was suckled, so to speak, on it ; and his fond love for it faltered not, even for a day. He lived with the Persian poets. They were his inseparable companions—companions in sunshine and in gloom. I always found on his table a choice collection of poets. To recite, to compare, to contrast, to judge, to decide the comparative merits of his favourite poets, was the one absorbing pre-occupation of his leisure hours, his one unwearying source of joy. To such literary banquets I had a free, unhindered passport ; and we sat, not seldom, far far into the night, exchanging views, declaiming poetry, feasting on

things divine. Fresh, fragrant, unforgettable is their memory —my priceless treasure, my unwaning joy. But I must stop and let him have his say: "I have always clung with passionate clinging to Persian poetry for—flowery though it be—it has always brought me consolation in sorrow, sunshine in joy. In the use of language as a musical instrument Persian stands second to no language in the world. Its classical poetry is music, music *par excellence*. But its charm is not confined to the mere witchery of words. We meet there forms and thought and feeling which, we Moderns had imagined, were our own exclusive birthright; our very own proud privilege and possession. But they are there in luxuriant abundance, expressed in language of exquisite appropriateness. They challenge and refute the claim of the Moderns to superiority over them in culture; in delicate, refined thoughts; in sweet, rapturous expression. Persian poetry, like all true poetry, takes life for its province; human destiny for its theme. It ignores not the seamy side of life. Who would ignore it who looks upon life steadily and looks upon it as a whole? But its message, nevertheless, is a message of joy and hope. It softens grief; it heightens pleasure; it consecrates effort; it inculcates resignation, and bids us be of good cheer amidst augmenting renunciation, dwindling hopes, vanishing joys. Bury Hafiz with me; for not even death shall divide us! All my life I have sauntered in his garden—rich in choicest flowers and fruits. I have listened to the music of its nightingales, the sweet notes of its birds. I have plucked and pressed its roses to my heart with tender, passionate caress. I have inhaled its intoxicating, heart-expanding, joy-inspiring, grief-forgetting fragrance and perfume. How often have I not called his Saqi and quaffed his sparkling Wine! Sweetest singer of Shiraz—Priest and Poet of Love and Life! Unfading is thy garden; eternal thy crown."

I must now bid farewell, *for the present*, to this MS. which I trust will ere long be in print for the lovers of Eastern Literature both here and abroad.

To these memories the following lines are apposite:

> First went my hopes of perfecting mankind,
> Next—faith in them, and then in freedom's self,
> And virtue's self, then my own motives, ends
> And aims and loves; and human love went last.

EXTRACT FROM "WITHERED LEAVES"

ODD DISCOVERIES AND STRANGE SECRETS

What do you think of it, moon. As you go ?
Is life much or no ?
O, I think of it, often think of it as a show
God means surely to shut up soon.
As I go.

It was a delightful moonlight night. The clock had just struck twelve, and all nature was wrapped in unbroken slumber. Everything was sweet, serene, sublime. The air was soft and fragrant ; the sky seemed one sheet of splendid blue ; the moon looked pathetically down on our vale of tears, and the stars shone conscious of their deathless beauty. There was a stillness—as it were the stillness of an intense, mystic vitality —around me. I stepped from my library—worn out with study, weary of life, sick of mankind—to enjoy, though for a moment, nature's unrivalled carnival. I was sad that night, inexpressibly sad, for my life has always been one long war with unexpected foes. I have spoken, and spoken freely, candidly—that has been my unforgivable fault. I have thought, and I have expressed my thought untrammelled—that has been my unpardonable misdemeanour. By frankness and candour I have raised a swarm of enemies, ever determined to smite or stab me. Even conversation over the wine and walnuts, which generally partakes of the character of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, was remembered, treasured, used for purposes of indictment and judgment against me. And yet, honestly and truthfully, I might say with a distinguished writer : " I have loved things and persons because I loved them, and loathed them because I loathed—not because the love or the loathing was fashionable, orthodox or heretical, customary or eccentric."

Lonely, grief-stricken was I that night, and I knew not why. But of my loneliness I was glad, for as Meredith Townsend quaintly observes " mankind in general are tigers in trousers." I was in no mood then to meet tigers or apes. Such were the thoughts that were passing through my mind when an unknown, rebuking voice called out to me : " the forty-fifth milestone of life hast thou passed, and yet thou understandest not man. Hath not the poet taught that the

greatest of things is charity? Hath not the philosopher inculcated that kindness and forgiveness are gifts divine unto the chosen ones of the earth? Then, O erring man, let not charity, kindness, forgiveness ever desert thee—be thy experiences what they may."

And the voice ceased to speak. I looked around, and none was there. Silence, solitude, stillness—the same as before—only they were occasionally interrupted by the sighing wind and the whispering leaves. I stood rooted to the ground in a dream, in a trance. Yes! charity, kindness, forgiveness—these only, to be sure, reconcile one to warring humanity, and these only soften, mitigate the burden of life.

Truly hast thou spoken, O voice of Goodness. But why am I chosen for the wrath of man? Social functions, political platforms, ambitious projects, soaring aspirations, favours of the great—not one of these have I sought, coveted, dreamed. I have lived in the seclusion of my library—away from the haunts of men. I have studiously avoided the tavern, the mosque, and the forum. Why then the fury and the fierceness of this persecution? I waited and watched a while, but no answer came. In sheer despair, said I "Couldst thou not answer, O moon, for thou hast known men and their ways for ages past? Could you not tell me, O stars, so soft and so serene, in the consciousness of enduring power? Would you not—bowing trees, whispering breeze, Spirit of Beauty—would none utter the secret, tell the tale?"

Then I heard a voice saying to me: "What shall I teach thee, thou fatherless man? Seclusion never has shielded man from the attacks of men. Does not man love and revel in cruelty, in lust, in wanton wrong? His abominations astonish me not, for what canst thou expect from a creature of his origin and his inherited instincts? Superiority he resents, and he puts seclusion and aloofness down to pride and affectation of superiority. Thus will he seek to pull thee down from thy lonely, far-off pedestal, and strive to do thee wrong. Thy superiority will be thy worst enemy, for it will give a keen edge to hatred and stridence to the voice of malice. Let not disappointment crush thy spirit, nor contemporary neglect deflect thee from thy path. Remember that the law of animal life is self-preservation, but the law of man's life is suppression of the Lower Self." Say with Ibn Yamin:

کنجی و همدمی و کتابی و خوردهٔ
از بهر ذوق نفس ز تاج وسریر به
وجهه کفاف اگر بکف آید ز دهقنت
نزد خرد ز خدمت شاه و وزیر به

I was pacified, assured, strengthened by this advice. What after all are worldly prizes but mere thistledown on the stream of time? What is contemporary fame but a fleeting lightning flash, followed by blackest gloom? How many of the *quondam* magnates—wielders of power, possessors of wealth, proud, arrogant, full of swank and show—how many, after their brief little day of fluttering, buzzing insect-life, have re-emerged from the oblivion into which they have all invariably sunk? I have seen too many of these stuffed puppets to take off my hat to them when they pass by in their tawdry coach. No! I have paid homage to naught but intellect or character—never to a mere holder of office—however exalted—devoid of learning, or of talents to his credit. But this is not worldly-wisdom. I confess I have always been deficient in worldly-wisdom, yet I have never regretted this deficiency. What sacrifice the smile, the nod, the handshake of the great involves! Greater, infinitely greater, than any of these little courtesies is worth. Put pride in your pocket; trample freedom underfoot; sacrifice judgment and forfeit character—and then the earthly gods will smile and shower their golden, glittering gifts upon thee. Seek them and receive them and hold them and hug them, if you will; but for thee, dear heart, they were never meant or intended. To have lived and loved; to have worked and worked honestly; to have done one's duty, and done it unswervingly; to have said and to have said what one had to say boldly, fearlessly; to have followed light, and to have adhered to the right—these are worth more than all the gifts and prizes and honours that soiled hands or tarnished coronets bestow.

In after days when grasses high
O'er-top the stone where I shall lie,
Though ill or well the world adjust
My slender claim to honoured dust,
I shall not question or reply.

I shall not see the morning sky;
I shall not hear the night-wind sigh;
I shall be mute as all men must
In after days!
But yet, now living, fain were I
That some one then would testify,
Saying—"He held his pen in trust
To Art, not serving shame or lust."
Will none?—Then let my memory die
In after days!

In this strain I stood thinking, and thoughts, lightning-like, rushed through my mind. I was hardly conscious of the march of time. Two hours had silently passed away. It was time to end my musings, my charming communion with nature, my silent banquet of thought. I retraced my steps homeward, and soon I was in my dear old study—so full of joyous and sad memories. I sat thinking of vanished days. Give back but one day, O God, from life's torn page, and restore, but for a moment, those dear ones—now no more—to my loving, longing arms. The figure of one friend rose before me—the friend whose friendship was my life's dearest joy, and whose death was the extinction of my life's brightest hope. But life is cruel and fates are unrelenting.

But though he is now no more, I praise God with joyous thanksgiving that I have one friend living—and may he be spared for many more years to come—whose house is a haven of peace from the contention-tossed world and whose company is an unfailing source of consolation, delight, encouragement to me. To him I wrote describing the strange experiences of that night, and telling him what a thing of odd discoveries, strange secrets, thrilling hazards life was. Odd discoveries, strange secrets—what curious revelations life's voyage brings unto us! "The veil falls from my soul and you may see it in lovely nakedness. They are no stains, only wounds. Ah! only wounds dealt by the hands of my friends, not of my enemies." Heine, thou hast expressed my innermost thought, and hast put it in language of exquisite perfection. There is a kinship between me and thee—the kinship of soul—that true kinship which defies the barriers of race and religion. Thou hast suffered; thou hast bled—and so have I. Between me and thee there is the uniting, sanctifying bond of suffering and of despair.

عمر تان بادو مراد ای ساقیان بزم جم
گرچه جام ما نشد پُرمی بدوران شما

EXTRACT FROM "WITHERED LEAVES"

فصل از باب شکست رنگ انشا کرده‌ام
میتوان راز درونم خواند از سیمای من

'LIFE AND ITS CHANGING SCENES'

I have never known the intoxication of power; for power I have never had: but I can well imagine what it is like—also what it is to lose it. Power is the driving-force of the world, its coveted prize. Nay, it is the divinity which man has worshipped with unfailing and unflagging zeal, and which he will continue to worship until the end of time. In some countries it is a more popular cult than in others; but in all it has its ardent votaries. Probably it has its largest following in my own beloved country. Centuries of "patriarchial government" and "benevolent despotism" have taught us the divinity of Circe. We know the power of the Crown, of the minister, of the judge, of the magistrate, of the office-clerk, and last but not least of the police. Incense and hymns and gifts and lévees—ah! what is it that we do *not* offer at that all-attracting shrine? Honour—what is that but a convention? Truth, a fad. Honesty—an inconvenient fiction. Character—idle chatter of the fool. All these—are they not thy trophies, thy tributes, O Power terrestrial, O Influence divine? But *Reputation!* Yes, *that* we believe in—thoroughly; and for that we work, spend sleepless nights, and intrigue. Reputation can be arranged for. And why not? 'Tis the path of least resistance. *Character*.....pouf! The powers that be are themselves short-sighted, if not blind, to that. But by *Reputation* they—even they—are readily impressed.

These reflections were borne in upon me on the occasion of a farewell entertainment given to a retiring friend of mine. Around me I saw faces wreathed in (as it were) stucco smiles. I saw floral tributes, radiant in their spotless splendour. I

saw the little ever-ready courtesies of "friends." I heard faint whispers of admiration, and, yes, even of censure; for in this world praise, rarely if ever, is unmingled with blame. I saw naught but mirth and laughter—blent together in apparently flawless perfection. But my own heart was troubled. All the gaiety around evoked in me no joyful response. To me it was an occasion of unrelieved sadness. For years I had been intimate with him—years of unclouded friendship. Now, that delightful chapter of our life was closing. Can anything be more pathetic or painful than to see or do a thing for the very last time? But sad it was for another reason too. It meant the official demise of my friend. With physical death the tragedy is with the survivors—with official death it is otherwise. It leaves its victim shorn of glory, bereft of power, robbed of that magic robe the hem of which thousands, only a moment ago, were striving to touch. Eyes, erstwhile so eagerly directed, are now averted. The hand that before rose so steadily to salute becomes strangely stiff and motionless; the world so radiant of yore, seems plunged in gloom; the once admiring, *salaming* throng of *Umidwallas* appear to be suddenly smitten with a paralysis of the appreciative faculties; prayers and presents and hymns—formerly so incessant in their flow—disturb no longer the pervading calm; by some seemingly malignant stroke of fate the adulated, adored one is divested of the charm and the magnetic power which drew and rivetted grovelling mankind to him. And oh, *how* grovelling mankind can be! How false they all seem!

Everything around me pointed unmistakably to the transitoriness of the world, to the vanity of human wishes, to the intense selfishness of man. I was watching the setting and the rising sun. How would I have loved to know the thoughts of these two *dramatis personæ*—the one for whom the sun of glory had set, and the other for whom it was rising. Some thought like the following must have been the former's: "Why wrenchest thou, O Fate, power from me? Am I not still able to wield it effectively? Have I not, through all these mortal years, served my master zealously, wholeheartedly, anxiously? Have I ever failed in my loyalty and devotion? Have I not imperilled my health; nay, have I not, at times, hushed into silence the still small voice within me, because that voice was at variance with my master's

command; have I not invariably fought my master's battle and won my master's cause. And yet to-day I am abandoned, forsaken, cast adrift to the mercy of wind and waves! Who knows whether the evening of my life will be gilded by soft moon-beams or close in weeping gloom?"

Perchance the situation even recalled to him the poignant words which the Bard of Avon has put into the mouth of Cardinal Wolsey.

But if despondency was probably the dominant note in the heart of one—serene confidence, hope, cheerfulness, equanimity must have characterized that of the other. For him a new world now burst into view for conquest—a new sphere of activity opened out for the display of talents, vigour and wisdom. The splendour of power encircles him—his is the incense of flattery, the hymn of sycophancy. In quite a different channel must his thoughts have run: "Reforms within and without; popularity but not at the expense of firmness; justice but justice fair and divine; conscience, not expediency, my light and guide—something good, something noble achieved, and done before the end comes and the curtain falls." I would be mistaken in the reading of human character if thoughts other than these possessed the minds of the two heroes of the day. But no one can claim infallibility—not I, to be sure.

To me, as I have observed, it was a sad, solemn, sobering occasion. How many, alas, are the hopes that we so fondly cherish! How many are the plans we so lovingly lay! How many are actually realized on earth! Time turns them into derision. But everything has a lesson, if we but take it as such. The power that *really resides in man* can never be taken or lopped away from him. It is his to the end. It is the power which earthly magnates *bestow* that has no permanence about it. How then is that *enduring* power attained? By feeding and fanning the spark of that "purer fire" which dwells in every man, and which Goethe says can never be altogether quenched, covered though it be, by the ashes of indifference and daily wants. That "purer fire" in man is lit by the spark divine which permeates life. Has not Sallust said that man unites in himself the God and the beast? Cultivate the God in you, and you have virtue, excellence, goodness. Cultivate the beast in you, and you have vice, ugliness; nay, all the lower world within you—

the world of the tiger and the ape. But it is not the *God* but the *brute* that has fascination for man. Hence the world, as we see it, is steeped in darkness, plunged in strife. True wisdom never fears, falters, frets.

In this world where everything shifts and changes; where joys and sorrows are closely interwoven; where sunshine and shower alternate; where marriage-song and funeral-dirge are sung side by side; where hope fails and love decays—in this world of changing scenes—is there anything worth weeping, sighing for?

Those very flowers—so splendid in their loveliness—which adorned the room and charmed the eyes—were they not symbols of our frail hopes and fleeting existence?

Say with Baba Fighani :—

پیش ما خاطر شاد و دل غمناک یکیست
حال اسوده و درد جگر چاک یکیست
راحت و رنج فغانی ز خیال من و تست
راست بین باش که نیک وبد افلاک یکیست

And again say with him :

فارغم از باغ و ناز سوسن ازاد او
و ز فریب باغبان و جلوه شمشاد او

EXTRACT FROM "WITHERED LEAVES"

Last Day of the Year

Eckermann relates that it was an invariable practice of Goethe to spend the last day of the year in silent meditation. We can well understand this. Most people make the last day of the year an occasion for extravagant joy, culminating in what they call seeing the old year out and the new year in. This attitude, too, we can understand. It is of a piece with the mentality which, discarding the setting, offers its worship

to the rising sun. The old year will soon expire and merge into the past—boundless, irreclaimable, beyond recall. It has made its gifts. Perhaps it has done its worst. Let it then—so people seem to argue—vanish into limbo ; but let us give a welcoming hand to its successor, with its infinite possibilities of pleasure and pain. Some such unconscious train of thought, passing through the mind of man, expresses itself, I suppose, in the tumultuous joy that accompanies the death of the old and the birth of the new year. In his exuberant enthusiasm he forgets the joys which the departing year has brought, as also the chastening, educative influence of its sorrows.

Man, 'tis said, is a thinking animal. This is fondly assumed as his distinctive attribute. But the most casual observation convinces us that the thinking man is an exception rather than the rule. The process of thinking is a painful process, involving strain, effort, weariness ; and all such processes are unrelished by man. " Prejudice which he pretends to hate is his lawgiver. Mere use and wont lead him by the nose." He accepts things as they are, follows them, adopts them, with unquestioning acquiescence, without a thought, heedless of their significance or implications. Virgil would not have sung with lyrical rapture *Felix qui potuit rerum causas cognoscere*, if knowledge, circumspection, thinking, were the normal characteristics of man. And it is as well that it is not so. Else would the world have been robbed of its charm, and man of his sweetest pleasures. It is as well that we think little, and allow ourselves still less to be worried by the vexing, entangling, fruitless problems of life and fate. Well that we do as the world doth ; think as the world thinketh ; go as the world goeth, along its old, old well-trodden ways. This rejoicing over the dying of the old year is perhaps a relic of ancient days, when life and property were insecure and precarious ; when warfare was the order of the day ; when chaos was rarely and fitfully relieved by gleams of peace and good-will. Yes ! perhaps. For then—as might be expected—humanity would look forward with straining eyes to the New Year to effect a happy change, or, perchance, to usher in the millennium—that mirage-like Golden Age which man has ever devoutly looked for, and—disappointments, nay despair notwithstanding—will ever continue to look for, till the end of time. Such a possibility—such

a dream—such a hope—how it would stir the human heart! What passionate longing would it not inspire! What a vision of a land of plenty would it not evoke—a land where no fears would shadow happiness; where no sound of human sorrow would mar the beatific calm. It was presumably the hope of such a prospect that led man to give a tumultuously emotional welcome to the New Year. Intermingled in that celebration were hope, feelings of relief, desires for peace. But though conditions have changed, man has not. He cannot rid himself of his ancient heritage. Does not the savage peer through the thin veil of civilised man? And this undoubtedly is one of the many survivals of primeval man.

But to some—to the rare group of thinking men and women—neither the end of the Old Year nor the beginning of the New is a day of mere joyous feasting.

> New year! new foes and old to face or fly;
> Old friends, a lessening band, to grapple fast;
> The end more near; another milestone past;
> The shagreen of desires shrunk woefully.

It is a day of stock-taking of the year's promise and its fulfilment. Ah! what a gulf lies betwixt the two. Reality never conforms—not even approximately—to the dreams which ambition weaves in the silent chambers of the heart. We see that our resolutions—good and pious resolutions, seriously made, deliberately willed—have been broken, strangled, killed under the stress of circumstances—adverse or uncontrollable. We find that the task—set in all solemnity and undertaken with all fervour—is far, far from completion. We perceive ruins, wreckage, a wild, weary, barren scene, where we had hoped to behold bud, blossom and bloom. We sorrowfully realize that one more mile-stone of life has been passed, and the day of reckoning is drawing closer and closer to hand. The thought presses upon us, what account are we to render of our stewardship to the Author of the universe? Such is the strain which serious thought takes on that most solemn of days. Dissatisfaction sets in. Dissatisfaction with our achievements. Dissatisfaction with ourselves. Who, then, could really be in light-hearted mood on a day such as the last day of the Old Year or the beginning of the New? The two attitudes are perfectly understandable—the thinking and the unthinking attitude. We do not

want pleasure banished, joy banned; but we do wish to see the reign of serious thought and serious living proclaimed, established, in all its solemn splendour and undying force.

We would not have a race of mere philosophers, but to reasonably thinking men we say—

> Do what thy manhood bids thee do; from
> none but self expect applause;
> He noblest lives and noblest dies who makes
> and keeps his self-made laws.
> All other life is living death, a world where
> none but phantoms dwell—
> A breath, a wind, a sound, a voice, a tinkling
> of the camel-bell.

XIX

IMPRESSIONS OF SIMLA

If there is any one thing to which I longingly look forward it is the Puja holidays. And the reason is simple. It is only during that fortnight that I recover my forfeited freedom: freedom to do what I please; to go where I please; in short, to follow my bent, entirely uninterrupted and uninterfered with. No one who has not been yoked to stern duties, or to the demands of an exacting profession, can realize or appreciate the joy of this regained freedom. During this serene interval there is complete cessation of dull routine work and strain; there is a salutary change of surroundings; there is unbroken leisure to renew old acquaintances, or to do homage to old masters. During this charming armistice law recedes into the background, and art and letters assert their sway. I love this temporary freedom, and all the more as its duration is so brief, and all too soon is its end. During the last six years we have made six successive pilgrimages to that home of gaiety—that seat of the Bengal Government—which is known as Darjeeling. Without being ungrateful for its many kindnesses in the past, we decided to visit another shrine of pleasure this year, and our choice fell on Simla. And Simla, undoubtedly, is the greater of the two shrines, for whereas one is provincial, the other is imperial in its tone and bearing. To Simla, then, we turned our steps. But, oh dear, when we reached Allahabad, there were dismal rumours afloat of floods and landslips; of transhipments; of possible halts on the way; of all manner of distressing perils—real and imaginary. But, like true pilgrims, bent on reaching our destination and turning a deaf ear to these terrifying rumours, we went our way. The only thing we noticed was that the train ran with extreme caution, and that we were held up, now and then, along our route. But safely we reached our destination, though ten hours behind time. Instead of arriving in daylight, we reached Simla at night. But this was not without its compensating advantage; for we saw the

lights of Simla—shimmering in the distance—gorgeous in their splendour. They seemed like so many fairy lamps suspended in the heavens, and lit up specially for some notable banquet of the gods. Very charming and impressive was the scene, and we felt absolutely spell-bound by it. Night soon slipped away, and when the sun rose, illumining the sky with its golden tinge, and shedding its light on the sombre hills, our sense of pleasure knew no limits. And how lovely Simla looked, bathed in sunshine and aglow with joy! It seemed to me a little paradise, free from the carping cares and petty vexations of life—a spot where humanity realized and acted upon the advice of the immortal Horace :—

"If thou art wise, then strain the wine. The span of life is brief.
So prune thy far out-reaching hopes—the while we speak has run
One niggard minute: clutch to-day, and trust no morrow's Sun."

And it does one good to be encircled with laughter and cheerfulness, even for a little, little while. And how interesting it is to watch from afar the snobbery and vanity of our kind—and we see plenty of both at Hill Stations—more so perhaps at Simla than anywhere else. The dominant note of the life there appeared to me to be a sabbathless pursuit of pleasure. Some sought it in the display of frocks and the conquest of men ; some in the soul-absorbing game of bridge ; some in that most delightful of vocations which is called "philandering" ; some in trumpeting their great achievements ; some in a quiet chat with friends ; some in long and some in lonely walks ; some on horseback—all, indeed, were determined to make the most of their time and opportunities in their own, own way.

A capital opportunity, for the study of man, offered itself to me at a Garden Party which I had the honour of attending. There I watched the game of the wealthy, the aristocrat, the official, the courtier ; and intensely interesting the game was. There, at one single spot, had gathered the cream and flower of society, in rich costumes, in gorgeous head-dresses, in fascinating gowns, in brilliant *saries*. Men were all politeness ; women all smirks and posturings. There were warm hand-shakes, charming courtesies, proud

humility, and a pervading air of loving brother and sisterhood. How my heart leapt with joy to see humanity so loving, so kind, so gracious! It almost seemed that the age of universal peace and love and goodwill—dreamt of by the poets—was at last realised on this earth, ending for evermore that era of malice, hatred, ill-will which has hitherto degraded mankind to a state of camouflaged savagery. It was a positive study in life to be there, and silently to watch the play. The great Heine has said, Let a man stand, for a while, in Cheapside, and he will learn more of men and their ways than any philosopher can teach him. Yes! Heinrich Heine—You always spoke the truth, and sometimes with a vein of intense bitterness. Let a man go to one of these fashionable resorts, and he will learn quite as much of men and their ways as he would in Cheapside. The artistically-laid lawn was dotted with the magnates of Simla, each well satisfied with his happy lot, and each the centre of a small group of admirers, all ready to nod, to smile, to laugh, to agree "according to plan." Beyond these fortunate groups which directly basked in the sunshine of official favour, there were less fortunate groups hanging around near by—whose members, with palpitating hearts, were seeking admission into the charmed circle. I could see their trembling frame; their expectant, eager looks; their alternating hope and despair, I could see, in short, their extreme anxiety to secure a smile. a hand-shake, a few words of benediction from the mighty wielders of power—the high-priests of our Indian bureaucracy. But if the lawn was the theatre of Indian loyalty—more wondrous still was the scene enacted in the pavilion where Their Excellencies took light refreshment and received the homage of the *élite*. It was a sight to see these "chosen", not to say "peculiar", few walk up to that hallowed enclosure. Pride was legibly inscribed on their faces; and well might that be—for out of the swarming, throbbing multitude, they alone had been selected for that high distinction. And besides pride the discerning eye detected something else; for frequent contact with Kings and Queens, dukes and duchesses, provincial governors and their exalted partners, had infected them with marked imperial airs, which, of course, they wore lightly like a flower.

What passed within the pavilion must be left to a high-soaring imagination, which knoweth no bar and feareth no

height. Entry there, was not for me. The garden-party, like all things earthly, ended—and I wended my way to my lodging, my mind in a ferment of thought.

Among the visitors who had come to Simla and whom I had the honour to meet—there were two who specially attracted and rivetted my attention : *Sir Faultless Omniscience* and *Lady Zulaikha Nurgis*. Sir Faultless was a member of the Indian Civil Service, and, as such, was one of the evanescent divinities of my country. He had passed through many stages of public service, and had now attained an eminence which is but rarely reached, even by the members of that *poorly-paid* service. He had ruled districts as Magistrate ; he had issued *mandamus* as Judge ; he had sent forth formidable edicts from the Secretariat ; he had held *even* his chiefs in awe of him. His days of glory—though nearing their end—are not yet over. Homage and the incense of adulation are therefore his yet a while. This Sir Faultless I met at breakfast, and fear seized me, and a chill ran through me, for I have always trembled at his name. Sir Faultless—so serious, so stern, so unbending in rectitude, so inflexible in virtue, so untiring in work—Sir Faultless, under the very same roof as the present writer—so entirely different from him ; so supremely inadequate ; so utterly steeped in faults. What strange things life offers ! What startling contrasts ! When I described Sir Faultless as serious and stern, it was no empty phraseology, but sober truth. Serious—for what else but serious could he be, when you remember the white man's burden which he has so nobly shouldered for years. Stern—what else but stern could he be, for has he not ruled the presumptuous equality-claiming blacks under overwhelming difficulties ? Sir Faultless is, in reality, faultless to a fault. Among his virtues—countless as the stars overhead—there are some obtrusively prominent. The most noticeable is his passion for gossip. He is well-stocked with all the scandals of the black and white. He is acquainted with the failings, the weaknesses, the vices of all—known or unknown to him. You need only go to him to obtain materials to blacken a foe or exalt a friend. Some captious countrymen of his dubbed him ' a *gossiping old woman*.' But, dear reader, this is sheer malice. He is merely greedy of information, of knowledge, of light. Have I not often heard him hum to himself the famous line of the 'Mantuan Bard' ? ***Felix qui***

potuit rerum causas cognoscere. In his great knowledge-seeking mind are carefully stored scraps of tittle-tattle, fairy-tales, spicy bits of gossip, savoury scandals of his time. He is an encyclopædia—the fullest and the completest ever known to man. I fear to think of the day when he will be no more. What priceless treasures will he carry with him to the grave—treasures, irrecoverable, lost for ever to humanity. But if the love of gossip is his striking virtue—no less conspicuous is the Socratic cast of his mind. He loves, in discussion, to corner a friend, to humble a foe. Rarely does he agree with any one. Opposition is in the very composition of his nature. He, therefore, opposes and opposes and opposes for evermore. But in this combativeness many detect vanity and conceit, a furtive claim to unerring wisdom, infallibility, omniscience. Hence his name, Sir Faultless. Sir Faultless is, as may be imagined, a finished scholar and, as such, he always lays down the law. His is not a mere mortal's voice, but that of a high pontiff of learning—sure of immortality, secure of a place by the side of Socrates and Plato and Aristotle. India—the unappreciative India—unmindful of its *own* children of light and lore—is hardly a place for one like Sir Faultless—so varied in taste, so matchless in endowments. In saying goodbye to you, Sir Faultless, may I respectively implore you to add Christian charity and Christian forgiveness to the list of your many shining virtues?

If Sir Faultless was the terror, Lady Nurgis was the joy of my life in Simla. She was a phantom of delight, a vision of perfect beauty. To such as she Hafiz must have addressed his amatory odes; Muhtashim his passionate panegyrics; Qaani his soul-entrancing poetry. I saw her for the first time on an exceptionally propitious night—the night of a dance—a night when youth and beauty met for riotous revelry. Delicately perfumed, endowed with nature's choicest gifts, adorned with art, a child of fortune—she swept into the room with a queenly air and superb assurance of her power and conquests. She rarely lifted her drooping eyes; she spoke in inaudible whispers; she played with her pencil; she looked abstracted, detached from her surroundings. She wore indeed, the appearance of a goddess in exile. I could see that, flung into the midst of mortals, she was ill at ease. She endured human companionship in silent but visible agony. She could —I saw—endure it no longer. She gently rose from her seat,

and set out for Tennyson's lucid interspace of world and world where never creeps a cloud or moves a wind. Such was my first vision of that goddess of love and youth and beauty! Since then I have paid my homage—for what mortal can refuse homage to her—from a distance, for I felt that mortal propinquity, mortal touch, would be distasteful, abhorrent to a nature so divine as hers. Ah! She must live with the flowers and nightingales. She must hold communion with the shining stars and the caressing moon. She is not of the earth—earthy. She must feed on poetry, and live on love—celestial poetry and divine love. May God grant this way-farer's prayer. Fair lady may thy beauty never fade! May thy happiness never end! I kiss the hem of thy garment, and I bid thee farewell.

Can I part with Simla without referring to its Church, where the slumbering piety of its citizens finds a religious outlet after a whole week of unresting race for pleasure. Nor can I forget its stately Council-House, where Indians are taught lessons in self-government and free speech—fearless of the Indian Penal Code. Nor yet its waste-paper baskets, set up—at regular intervals—all along its fashionable walks.

My fortnight flew apace, and, with regret, we packed for our homeward journey. Simla not only ungrudgingly contributed to our happiness, but vastly added to and enriched our experiences of life.

XX

IMPRESSIONS OF DARJEELING

WHAT a joy to reach at last—after a tiresome journey—that delightful land of roses and love—that paradise of Bengal—the haunt of our beneficent Olympians. Yes! it was a weary, anguishing journey. Not until midnight, and then, in pouring rain, did we reach Darjeeling. Oh! the memory of that dismal journey—with hill-train, rushing and rattling and puffing through the gloom of night, amid wailing streams and rustling winds, overwhelming the soul with a sense of the merciless vastness of the universe of matter and the pitiless severity of fate.

The night over—our waking eyes greeted the sun in its matchless majesty. Bathed in light—the mountains seemed as though they were smiling at man's fleeting pilgrimage on this earth; the sky—sapphire blue—with here and there a floating fleece—evoked strange stirrings in the soul; the enamelled covering spread below—deftly woven by nature's artistic hand—added vastly to the enchantment of the scene; the aged fir-trees, in their ever-fresh green mantle, swaying under the gentle caresses of the sauntering breeze, looked as though they were waving their little fairy hands to the wayfarers in quest of seemingly never-attained peace.

Sad and chastening thoughts filled the mind and chilled the heart. Creature of the conventions of the hour—what else is man but a handful of dust, to be swept forthwith away into viewless space? But these melancholy musings soon ended.

> "We dance along death's icy brink;
> But is the dance less full of fun?"

There, in that Eden of Ind, there is yet another enchanting paradise within—the Gymkhana Club—where "never creeps a cloud or moves a wind." It is one of those few places in India where the gods, in their magnanimity, have allowed

admission to the mortals who are in their trust and keeping. It is a rare privilege. I, certainly, deem it so; for where else can we see our divinely-ordained rulers rid of official burdens, stripped of official robes, sunny and radiant, athirst for pleasure, emulating and excelling each other in kind attentions to womankind? Yes! it is charming to see the gods at home—at ease—sharing mortal infirmities—not infrequently victims to intrigue and jealousy and heart-agonising trifles. One of my greatest pleasures has been to sit and watch the smouldering passions of love, slowly kindling into blaze—to observe the wondrous toilets and dresses, notably the high and the ever-higher mounting skirts; to admire the brilliant feats at the rink; to enjoy the ceaseless murmurings of the many-coloured butterflies and the heart-ravishing courtesies of their earthly satellites.

What a prospect for St. Francis of Assisi to witness—a veritable scene of Christian continence, love and piety!

What would not Heinrich Heine have given to be there, even for a day! How the experiences there would have enriched, embellished his "English Sketches"!

As you walk along—in one of the finely furnished rooms—graced by the élite of Darjeeling—you see book-cases lined with literature. The Library undoubtedly sustains the traditions of Darjeeling. There, you clearly discern its tastes and cravings. It consists mostly of sex novels—the devouring rage of the age. Of serious literature there is but a sprinkling. French is represented by our beloved Anatole France, but German, so far as I could see, was left severely in the cold. Andrew Lang once said that if you wanted to measure modern culture you need only look at the books sold at the railway stalls. And Andrew Lang was right. But we should not complain of the absence of serious literary atmosphere in a library intended for pleasure-seekers and hunters of elusive joy. Our age is prolific in devices, and the unceasing torrents of novels are but one of its countless devices to combat the "ennui" of modern civilization, and to supply a refined method of killing time. Printed matter is not generally "read" either for edification or instruction, but for temporarily quietening the agitated-soul in its sabbathless pursuit of gaiety.

At the tea-table you will be eternally damned if you have not read the latest novel of the day. Such reading is the

mark of our high calling—the sure proof of our superior culture. Yet, however captious or critical you may be, you cannot but, at once, fall desperately in love with the ball-room. It is a magnificent chamber—a piece of charming artistry—where many a first love began and matured; where not infrequently insurgent passion threatened to break the barriers of Law and Convention; where many a home has been built and wrecked!

What our poor, poor oriental poets have dreamt of so yearningly is daily enacted on the floor of the Gymkhana Club, Saturday Club, Palais De Dance, and other places besides—public and private. Youth and Beauty—in close contact and companionship—twirling round and round the room—snowy hand on manly shoulder and manly arm encircling willowy waist—tell me, dear reader, can you really marvel at the modern craze for dancing? Would Hafiz have hesitated to barter his immortality away for a Fox Trot with Shakh-i-Nabat? Not for a moment, I wiss!

If votes for dancing are ever taken—I shall vote for the introduction of dancing among us orientals. To it I ascribe the longevity of the Westerner—his chivalrous spirit, his sporting mood, his gaiety, vivacity, in short his zest for life. After the day's work is done—he has something to look forward to—something to cheer him—something to worship and adore. The outstretched hand of his dancing partner—her soul-ravishing smile—her sweet, inaudible whispers—her elusive promises to sit out a dance—her eyes that "speak and yet say nothing"—tell me, tell me, has life anything lovelier to offer—have gods anything more attractive to promise?

Let the Orient follow in the footsteps of the Occident if she seeks to break the gloom and monotony and cheerlessness of existence, and make this brief, ever-too-soon-ending pilgrimage a scene of interest, variety, consuming rapture.

Yes! whether Darjeeling improves our health or not—it certainly enlarges our outlook on life, and makes us yearn, with an irrepressible yearning, for institutions such as rinking and dancing, where Brave and Fair can clasp hands, and Youth and Beauty have their fill of joy.

XXI

MAHATMA GANDHI

In this age of prattling politicians, cheap patriots, seekers after notoriety and place-hunters, it is an inestimable delight to hear the voice of one burning with truth and righteousness, and firm in his determination to uphold them, cost what it may. Such a voice heartens and braces us, and inspires in us a conviction—so sorely needed now—that, even in modern India, there are men who will not be bought and sold—to whom truth is the very breath of life, and service in the cause of their country the sole object of existence. Of this type are and have been the prophets who have led humanity through the wilderness to the promised land, standing four square to all the winds that blow. And in India to-day, whose is such a voice ? None other than Mahatma Gandhi's—a man who may be called the highest spiritual peak of his country—shining in radiant splendour, helping, uplifting, beckoning his countrymen to the heights whereon he himself stands. Here is the solitary man who has power to speak out of an independent soul—who is cast in the heroic outlines we miss in others. His words enthral us, set us aflame as no other man's words do. Christ-like in his love of truth—St. Francis-like in his hatred of wealth—not unlike the Prophet of Arabia in his all-conquering will—Gandhi stands to-day before the astonished, watching world as the supreme type and exponent of all that is loftiest, brightest and best in his motherland. And wherein lies the supreme excellence of this preacher of compelling force and personality ? In the union of the practical with the ideal. He is not a visionary roaming in an imaginary paradise—culling flowers and weaving chaplets for a merely ideal world. Nor is he merely a practical hard-headed statesman bent upon the attainment of his purpose, heedless of ways and means. He incarnates in himself the practical and the ideal—the practical leading up to the ideal—the ideal controlling, chastening the practical.

And it is this precisely which gives him his incomparable power, his irresistible sway; for, in our age, is not the ideal always in danger of perishing from the spreading, devastating flood of materialism? And it is this wondrous fusion of the two which has made his appeals so widely acceptable—stirring India to her depths. In him the vague mysticism of the East has been happily-wedded to the shrewd practical wisdom of the West. Has he not poured new wine into old bottles? Has he not opened a door to light and liberty? Has he not, by altering old boundaries, added new territories to his own "spiritual" kingdom? His words have the force of law—his personality an all-subduing magic spell. And all this simply because he has given expression to some of the hitherto inarticulate aspirations of his country—because he has gathered together its scattered forces, probed its unsuspected depths—welded and concentrated them—showing, as none else had showed before, India's capacity for union, co-operation, concerted measures. His insight—not unlike the insight of the prophets of yore—discovered the latent force, the slumbering strength of his country. And yet he is pre-eminently in terms a preacher of peace. Fire and sword are not instruments of his propaganda. He rebukes violence—condemns the revolutionary spirit—and seeks the success of his mission in peaceful progress, "spiritual" conquests. He emphasizes the "spiritual" value of political institutions and the realization of our moral manhood by its expansion into national organization. Even where he suggests resistance—the resistance counselled is in terms of a pacific—more of a moral than of a fighting—kind. But of that later.

What is the cult of *Charkha* but the cult of discipline and austerity? What else does it imply but simplicity, self-abasement, discipline, encouragement of our indigenous arts and crafts? Some sneer at it—some laugh at it—some regard it as merely a wild, impracticable scheme—but to those that have the eye to see and the intelligence to understand—it is as great and as far-reaching a scheme as the disciplinary prayer of early Islam. In the onrush of the wave of European civilization we are a little too apt to forget or ignore our good old ways. Gandhi bids us keep in with the past—not break with it—for does not the future of India lie in its association with, not severance from, ancient glories?

But if the cult of *Charkha* fosters and implants discipline,

the doctrine of civil disobedience is a pacific but none the less an effective challenge to authority to govern in conformity with and not against the wishes of the governed. It is the assertion of the will of the people—their determination to be heard and obeyed. And this is the Mahatma's crowning achievement. India that lay asleep—almost the sleep of death—rose at the sound of his voice, and called for and claimed her due. Recall the India of thirty years ago—the bowing, acquiescing, submitting, trusting, trembling India—receiving bureaucratic edicts with sealed lips and folded hands and bended knees—recall that India and compare it with the India of to-day—with its fierce criticisms, stridently vocal demands, its fiery thought, its unbending will, its unflinching stand. Who is the author of this marvellous transformation? The Mahatma of course. But his two forerunners we must not forget—the pensive, brooding Sir Syed and the clarion-voiced Hali of Panipat. The contribution of one was his deep thoughts—forceful utterance was that of the other. They paved the way for the Mahatma, and with them, indeed, must he share the glory of the march to the promised land—long trudge yet though it be.

Gandhi has laid the foundation of Indian freedom. Inscribed in letters of gold will always be his name in the Temple of Indian Liberty. He has taught India to speak out her mind in scorn of consequences—to hold out for her indefeasible rights—to obey law and maintain order, but only when law is not lawless, and order not a travesty of itself. And, above all, he has taught us to uphold and maintain the Reign of Righteousness.

The cult of *Charkha* may in course of time become a creed outworn—the doctrine of Civil Disobedience a weapon rusty or useless: but the spirit which he has infused into India is India's undying possession, which will broaden and deepen more and more with the revolving Sun. It is the spirit of justice, honour, righteousness. The apostle of freedom whom nothing could hinder or thwart—the architect of India's Temple of Liberty—the immortal Gandhi unites in himself the fire of Cavour and the sweetness of St. Francis.

XXII

SIR ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE

It was somewhere in 1890 or 1891 that I first saw Sir Asutosh Mookerjee. I saw him at Bankipore where he had gone to see my father on some private business of his own. A mere school boy then—I had only a distant vision of him. But I well remember the hushed awe in which my town's folk spoke of Dr. Mookerjee, as he then was. Evidently the popular eye even then beheld in him the coming man, the man of destiny. This is the earliest recollection that I have of the late Sir Asutosh. In 1901, when I joined the Calcutta Bar, my acquaintance really began with him. It soon deepened into affection, and the succeeding years strengthened and mellowed it. What irresistibly drew me to him was his consuming passion for books and immense enthusiasm for learning. Our tastes were similar—our Temple of Worship—the Temple of Minerva—the same. Distinctly, as though it took place but yesterday, I remember my first interview with him at his house in Bhawanipur. He gave me a cordial reception. He took me over his library. He showed me his collection, rich in rare and select books. He spoke of the romance of book-collecting; the good luck that occasionally awaited the lover of books. It was a delightful meeting—the first of the many that we have had since. His library was a monument of his catholic taste. Every branch of learning was represented there; every book of mark had a place on his shelf. I was enthralled by him. And who would not be? His easy manners, his disarming candour, his liberal sympathies, his encouraging counsel—such an assemblage of qualities—would they fail to make a friend or appease a foe? One incident connected with my first meeting with Sir Asutosh should not be omitted. He pointed out *Howell's State Trials*, and recommended its careful study to me, I asked for the loan of a volume. With a smile he told me—he never lent books; but immediately added that in my case he would

break the rule. The volume found its way to my house and contributed to many hours of unfailing delight. I was one of the few exceptions to whom he lent his books. The last loan was the loan of the 4th volume of ' the Cambridge Medieval History ' which he especially took for me from Calcutta to Patna, last April, to enable me to study the chapter on Byzantine Law and Administration. As the years went by I came into closer and closer contact with him. His interest in me and my work grew, and I am not exaggerating when I say that but for his kindly interest my literary and historical work would have ended years ago for sheer want of sympathy and encouragement. His death—besides being a deep personal loss to me—is a blow to Islamic culture in Bengal. But of this later.

On my return from Dacca Sir Asutosh appointed me a lecturer at the Law College. I may be permitted here to repeat, in this connection, a story which is in circulation and which needs correction. I was taking morning classes which began from 9.30 and continued till 11 a.m. The hours did not quite fit in with the Court hours; as Court work, *then*, began at 10 a.m. precisely. With the complete concurrence of my students I altered the time from 9.30 to 7 a.m. I was satisfied, and so were my students; but the authorities of the Law College were evidently not. I held my classes at the altered hours, for a few days, and the matter was duly reported to Sir Asutosh. I was, accordingly, summoned to his Chambers, at the High Court. At 2 p.m. I made my way in fear and trembling. I quailed at the prospect of the storm that I had to face, but face it I must. I entered the room and I could see the great man somewhat ruffled in temper. " So you have become the king of the Law College," said he, in an angry tone. " Yes," rejoined I, " and you are the king-maker." He smiled; he gently rebuked me and sent me away saying " Go thy way and sin no more." Thus was averted one of the greatest of calamities. But this was not the only report that was made against me. Mine has always been the unenviable lot of possessing innumerable *friends*, who make it their business to harm me. In this, their generous effort, they have never remained idle or slow. But—however successful in other quarters—they failed with Sir Asutosh.

I shall not obtrude any more personal matters here.

What, might be asked, was the secret of Sir Asutosh's greatness? Lord Bacon has truly said: "The nobler a soul is, the more object of compassion it hath." Compassion then was the striking note of his personality. He knew 'the chains of ill' that bind our lives. To the suffering he brought relief; to the wounded spirit, words of assuagement and of peace, and to all—loving-kindness. Never was an appeal for help made in vain! Never was a judgment passed untempered by mercy. And next to compassion was his wondrous insight into human character. He read a man at sight. He took his measure, and he dealt with him accordingly. Many a morning I have sat and watched Sir Asutosh dealing with men, and many a lesson in wisdom I have learnt there.

Pride he had none. Simple, unostentatious were his ways; and lightly, like a flower, did he wear his learning—and immense learning too. He never showed impatience or displeasure at the unceasing stream of visitors at his house or at their not infrequently absurd demands. Here we have the secret of his greatness.

When I met him on the 3rd of May, 1924, at the Burdwan Station—the Punjab mail was late by two hours; and, providentially for my benefit, I found him happy, radiant, full of plans for future work. Little did I dream then that that would be my very last meeting with him. But so it was to be. His death—so tragical in its suddenness—has plunged not only Bengal but the whole of India into deep unrelieved gloom. By far the greatest Indian has passed into the shade, and keener and acuter becomes our grief when we remember that just at the moment when his presence, his guiding hand, his towering intellect, his forceful personality were needed most—fate should take him away from us. It was but yesterday that he said farewell to the High Court—of which he was a most distinguished ornament—and, when he laid down the staff of his high office, we felt an inward thrill that his great powers would now seek and find a larger field of activity and a wider scope for beneficent work than the Bench offered. Our mental vision pictured Sir Asutosh at the head of public life in Bengal—controlling the exuberance of the idealist, infusing courage in the weak and faint-hearted, leading the battle for truth and justice and freedom. But time—which usually turns our hopes into derision—has wrecked our dream. But not even Time or Death can take

his gifts away from us. Well might we say: "Still are thy pleasant voices, thy nightingales, awake; for Death he taketh all away, but them he cannot take." The greatest and the most enduring gift is the University itself; for has he not liberalised it, reformed it, and made it a true centre of light and lore, of research and Advancement of Learning. For this he toiled incessantly, never wearying, never resting, battling with all his might, and standing four-square to all the winds that blew.

The Post-Graduate classes are the flower and fruit of his noble, unsparing efforts. Do they not claim all knowledge as their province—its diffusion their sole reason for existence? He insisted, inculcated, emphasized that a University was not a place where commercial interests should ever come into play, and that its one supreme object was to hold aloft the torch of learning—cost what it might.

But if he was never tired of reiterating the true functions of a University—he taught, in no uncertain voice, another lesson of deepest and profoundest import. It was a noble lesson—a lesson taught by the noblest men in all ages—namely, Love of Freedom. For no true progress can there be where there is no Freedom—freedom from the shackles of priestcraft; freedom from the bondage of superstition; freedom from the fetters of authority—secular or otherwise. Naught but an emancipated intellect can seek, strive and achieve. No power could bend him to submission; no glittering gewgaw could lead him away from the path of duty. There is one branch of learning which owes a special debt to him—it is the Islamic learning—and at it his death has dealt the heaviest blow. He saw the importance of Muslim Culture, and he sought to bring it within reach of the educated public. He introduced Islamic History into the Calcutta University, and in a thousand and one ways encouraged Islamic studies. He encouraged the translation of such monumental works as those of Von Kremer, Weil and Wellhausen, and eagerly undertook their publication. This meant another step forward towards the advancement of Islamic studies. He had yet more extensive schemes for the furtherance of Mohamedan learning, and many an evening after the day's work was done—he and I sat together at Patna discussing the future of Mohamedan studies at this University. His last speech at the Behar and Orissa

Research Society will convey some idea of the work he was contemplating in that direction. He aimed at making the Calcutta University the Centre of Mohamedan Studies in Bengal. He hoped to gather here not only Indian Scholars of note but also European Scholars of renown. I was asked to invite Prof. Browne, on behalf of this University, to deliver a course of lectures on Persian Poetry. I was further asked to invite Prof. Harowitz of Frankfurt to deliver a course of lectures on Arab Civilization. He was anxious, too, for a course of lectures on the system of Administration of Justice in Islam, and so keenly interested was he that in spite of the heavy strain of work at Patna, he discussed the entire plan of the lectures with me. I am proud to say that in my possession I have the title page of the contemplated lectures, written in his own hand—a memorial of his love for Islamic Studies and a remembrancer of his wish to me—now a sacred duty and a trust which I must needs fulfil.

In him a great light has gone out. Whatever differences of opinion there may be on other points, there will be none in this, that Sir Asutosh (to quote the language of a great writer) made great spaces in human destiny very luminous.

But though sore is our grief and irreparable our loss—we can yet serve the great master by following in his footsteps —trying as best we can to live up to his ideals—fighting for freedom, seeking for light.

I shall conclude with what I said at the Senate House: "Courage was his watchword, Freedom his guide. Let these be also our watchword and our guide."

XXIII

C. R. DAS

WITH the death of C. R. Das one of the greatest Bengalis of our time has passed into the Beyond. A fortnight ago none could have divined that he was so near the end, and yet Fate had decreed it so. Indisposed he undoubtedly has been for some time, but there were no alarming symptoms —there was no foreboding of the catastrophe which has overwhelmed Bengal with such tragic suddenness.

The hand that so deftly guided the political destiny of Bengal is, alas, now no more to guide her; to lead her to the fondly wished-for goal—Self-Government. His death is a national calamity; for, quite irrespective of caste and creed, all feel that a shattering blow has been dealt at India's aspirations—a hopeless void created—beautiful Hind suddenly bereft of her crowning glory! And if this is the case in the sphere of politics—no less keen and acute is the sense of loss in the social sphere. All feel his death as a personal loss—an irreparable loss. For did he not add sunlight to daylight, hush strife, bring peace, emphasize the necessity of charity and good-will?

And if any proof of the universality of this feeling was needed—it was abundantly supplied in the funeral procession —the last tribute to the memory of the great dead—which threaded its melancholy way to the ghat on that momentous June morning. It was a moving sight—a sight such as Calcutta or any other city in India, within living memory, has not seen. All Bengal turned out to pay her homage— to mourn a national calamity. Cold and irresponsive must be the heart which was not stirred at that solemn spectacle! A people's grief! A people's tears! What honour can be greater? What offering more acceptable? The grief of man was shared by the sunless, cloud-covered sky, and the prevailing gloom of Calcutta was the proof of the all-pervading sorrow of the day.

It boots not to speak here of his enormous sacrifices—his selfless pursuit of a great ideal—Self-Government for India. Unique was his position at the Bar. He had mounted to that eminence by unflinchingly adhering to the great traditions of his profession. And when at its very pinnacle—with his fame resounding throughout India and briefs pouring in in unceasing flow—he determined to forsake it *all*, and to dedicate himself to his country's cause—scorning worldly allurements—flinging wealth away, and, like St. Bernard, taking poverty as his bride, and spirituality as the supreme ambition of his life.

It was the compelling love of his country—the consuming eagerness to secure her dues—that determined his choice—irrevocably fixed his purpose. He was a patriot—saturated with patriotism, not like many, a make-believe one, with an easily rendible mask. His political career is only too well known to call for a detailed account here.

But what was it that gave C. R. Das that power—that influence—that primacy among his fellow-citizens? I had known C. R. Das for a quarter of a century, and knew him pretty well. To my mind there were two outstanding qualities which made him what he was, his burning love for his country, and his shining spirit of charity.

Long before he stood out before the world as a political figure of incomparable excellence, he discussed, felt, brooded over his country's woes—uttered his country's hopes—dreamed of the ways and means which would lead her to honourable prosperity. Was he not a preacher of India's political aspirations even in the far-off days of his early manhood? Still in my ears ring some of the sentences of his speeches delivered in England before he was called to the Bar. They were prophetic of his subsequent career—an earnest of what was to come.

As the years passed by, this passion for his country waxed stronger and stronger—completely subduing, conquering him. Nothing could deflect him from his set purpose. The die was cast. Imprisonment—threat of exile—nothing could deter him from his course. It was on the occasion of the arrest of C. R. Das that I wrote the following lines which C. R. in one of his speeches quoted as the encouraging message of a Persian Poet (it was published as a translation from a Persian Poet):

"Faith, Fortitude, Firmness, will they falter and fail and fade in the hour of trial, in the moment of despair, asked the Saqi, in mournful strain. Or tried and tested, will they emerge from the fire of life strengthened, ennobled, purified? Never will I forsake them, answered the youth, not even were the heavens to fall. Thine, thine, said the Saqi, is the path of glory; thine a nation's gratitude; thine, the fadeless crown. Would that courage unfailing, courage unbent, courage as thine, were the proud possession of all! For naught but courage winneth the soul's freedom—man's noblest, highest prize. Let courage, then, be thy gift, O God, to this wondrous land of Love and Light" (My *Love Offerings*, p. 57).

When I stated that one of the two qualities that distinguished him was the love of his country, I must add—love of country, unimpaired by any factional or communal spirit. He was too broad-minded; too acute a statesman to imagine that India could ever come by her inheritance without Hindu-Muslim love, unity, co-operation. He was always averse to the mutual Hindu-Muslim hostility which, I regret to say, is deepening, and of which we get sad, infallible proof day by day.

At the time when the Hindu-Muslim pact was a prominent political question of the day—at my table—at 5 Elliott Road—met the Hindu and the Muslim leaders of Bengal. I am not at liberty to disclose what passed at that meeting, for that would be a breach of faith, both to the dead and the living; but this much I can say, without violating any confidence—that throughout that delicate discussion C. R. Das showed a spirit of charity and compromise; an anxiety to meet the Mohamedan case; an eagerness to give the Muslims their just dues; in short, he was prepared to give any undertaking wanted that would satisfy Muslims of his good faith. About midnight we parted, but, I grieve to say, without any satisfactory result.

C. R. Das realized—what we all must needs realize—that if we wish our motherland well we must adopt and pursue a policy of reconciliation and goodwill towards all. In unity lies our political strength—in disunion our political death. Mahomedans have no more intention of renouncing their claims upon India than the English have, and this simple truth C. R. Das clearly perceived; and would to God that his co-religionists realized it too!

The intrusion of religion into politics has been the bane of the East, as their severance has been the glory of the West.

But if the love of country was Chitta Ranjan's absorbing passion—his spirit of charity was the source whence originated his broad outlook, his generous toleration, the instinct for fair-play that characterized his actions throughout his career.

But though death has taken him away—the spirit which he has infused and the traditions which he has implanted—are eternal and imperishable. And what is that spirit?—It is the spirit to break the images of false gods and to rend the veil of humbuggery. And what is that tradition?—It is the tradition to appropriate the wisdom of the West without abandoning the lead of our Eastern sires. In other words to unite the spirit of Conservatism with the spirit of Progress—to train ourselves to a sense of responsibility and discipline—to end all mockeries and to substitute realities in their place—to work with unhesitating, unfaltering steps—for self-government—the crown and consummation of all the political efforts of civilized man.

Let us resolve to carry on C. R. Das's work to its consummation—let us hush our differences—let us prove ourselves worthy of the torch handed over to us by him—a torch which he held with heroic steadfastness.

If there is any such thing as immortality of soul or continuity of life after death—the immortals will, assuredly, rejoice with our rejoicings and grieve with our griefs, but no joy can be greater than the joy of seeing their unfinished work carried on with undeviating firmness and no grief keener or more agonising than to see it dropped or half-heartedly pursued.

Dead!—no! it is a misnomer to call him dead whose voice still lingers in our ears—whose personality still subdues and sways us—whose spirit still animates us—and whose example is our undying, enduring possession.

Immortal art thou—Chitta Ranjan—beyond death's conquest, and beyond oblivion's reach. Thine is the crown of immortality—thine, a people's gratitude.

XXIV

BABA FIRAWN: ACTING GOVERNOR OF TEHRAN

TEHRAN was stirred to its depths by the publication of the *Romance of an Upstart*—the most striking novel of the year. The author has set himself a tremendous task—the task of exposing imposture on the part of his countrymen. He is frank, outspoken, fearless, and his criticisms are merciless and devastating. With its outbursts of shattering vituperation, its inflammatory scorn, its boundless power and overflow of passionate speech, the book thrills you, grips you, enchants you, from cover to cover. As the most superficial reader can see, it is the product of our age of science, new knowledge, searching criticism, followed by multiplied doubts and shaken beliefs. The author is no respecter of persons. He freely uses the scalpel. His one object is the discovery of truth, unlovely though the truth may be; for truth, he says, is disdainful of false airs, complacent attitudes, submissive acquiescence. Truth, then, he proposes to exalt, to enthrone, to set up for unwavering worship and devotion. He sees around him the world wearing a mask, and this mask he snatches away and rends.

He begins with religion; and what a hideous reality he finds there! The religion of the Prophet, stripped of virtue, and purity, and light and leading, he sees, buried in meaningless rituals and formulæ—lovingly clung to—fiercely fought for—but of its essence no account is taken; no attention paid to it. And what is the result? Long, flowing beards; elongated beads; huge, variegated *turbans*; ceaseless chatter about the future of Islam; anxious endeavour to follow the minor details of the *Sunna*, such as the clipping of one's moustache, or the scheduled length of one's trousers; copious stream of tears in *Mohurrun* week; rapturous ecstasy at the *Moulud-ul-Nabir* and similar strange practices—neither

good nor creditable, neither noble nor uplifting to the soul. Of love, charity, forgiveness, humility—not a word, not a trace. Religion, thus, has become a barren formula, a little *tamasha* incapable of ministering comfort, incapable of raising the sunk, self-weary man.

And what can come out of such a system—devoid of light and inspiration? Make religion, then, a reality, a working code of life, a rule of conduct, an abiding possession —attuning your souls to things higher and things divine— bringing home the sweetness of humility, the beauty of charity, the loveliness of forgiveness. An axe must first be laid at the prevailing religion of the day, and with no uncertain hand, Allah be praised! True spirituality must be the basis of all religious and civic virtues; for naught but that can furnish a steady or a stable foundation on which to build up the national life. This sorry condition of religion is painfully reflected in domains social and political. False are the smiles, false the handshakes, false the daily life, of us Persians, through and through. Honesty, truthfulness, sincerity, shrink from openly showing themselves; nay, vice itself is now no longer conscious of its own deformity. With a social system steeped in corruption, saturated with iniquity, diplomacy is but a fancy name for unmitigated villainy, and politics naught but a cloak, a thin, visible cloak, for brazen-faced, self-seeking, appallingly corrupt practices.

Our politicians are a wonderful race—worthy of serious, extended, scientific study. What harvests await the explorer —rich, amazing harvests! They change with the changing hour—their leaders are always in mortal dread of defection or disloyalty. Like the waves, they are ever restless, fretful; and, like the waves, too, restless, fretful to no seeming purpose. Even tea-parties do not always ensure their loyalty! what an ungrateful race! Now and then, however, a leader—we have many leaders—temporarily soothes them with promises of lollipops; but lollipops never really come, and, after a short wait, agitation, restlessness, fretfulness begin anew.

What these patriots are aiming at, I have not yet quite understood. Some say free Parliament, Home Rule, Control of the Purse, banishment of the '*Firunj*'! Between ourselves, in the strictest confidence, I fear the day when all these dazzling dreams of our patriots will be actually realized. I have some little experience—very little indeed—of the public

life and the political life and the official life of my countrymen —the descendants of *Bahram* and *Nawshirwan*—and my slender experience tells me that the Home Rule, so eagerly sought for, will be the rule of sons-in-law, actual or prospective, or, better still, of scrupulous adventurers who have captured or enslaved our gullible countrymen by eloquence, or promises, or by some other more mysterious and effective methods.

The facile talk about freedom and liberty does not really mean much. It is a pleasant pastime, an enticing amusement. Should His Majesty to-day put forward some repressive measures—strangling freedom of speech, or taking away the right of open trial for political suspects—the politicians, custodians of the inalienable rights of the people, would not hesitate to help His Majesty forward in his righteous and laudable endeavour.

Did not *Mulla Nadan* and *Hakim Ahmuq* actually once counsel the *Shah* to forge such weapons for the destruction of the seekers after light and liberty? The truth is, we are a venal race who can always be bought and sold. What would we not do for a *Wizarat*; for a membership of the *Shah's* cabinet; for a seat in the *Sadder Adalat*; for a position in the Council of State? Allah be praised!—we are not the stuff of which patriots are made; for the chain affrights us, and the dazzling offices under the *Shah* lure, ensnare, enthrall us!

But Glory to Allah that, even to us degenerates, His infinite mercy has sent a prophet, a statesman, a ruler of men, of the highest moral order and the supremest intellectual endowment. This was *Baba Firawn*, noted for his severe idealism, ardent patriotism, warm humanity. History has no light to throw on his birth or ancestry. They are, *for the present*, veiled in the profoundest obscurity. Up to the age of thirty, he worked *underground*, but at thirty, apparently from nowhere, he suddenly burst upon the horizon of Persia. The astonished Persians greeted his appearance with the same fervour as they would had he been their hidden *Imam*.

Baba Firawn was endowed with extraordinary gifts; striking personal beauty, slightly marred by a squint and a *concealable* deformity; a tremendous will-power, but a will power slow to move; amazing eloquence, but eloquence only heard by angels and night-birds; an intellect replete with the wisdom of ages, but alas! of no benefit to man or beast; a pen, sharper than a rapier, but always resting in its sheath;

a sense of unfaltering justice, which detected merits only in those he loved, to the exclusion of the broad broad world outside his ken or kinship. Since his appearance on the stage of life at the mature age of thirty, his career has been a triumphal procession. As honour after honour was conferred upon him, he became distant and aloof, weighted with public cares, bowed down by the burden of his own greatness. By degrees he mounted to the highest position save one; namely, the Governorship of Tehran. To attain this—the crown and culmination of his career—he moved Heaven and Earth. Earthly efforts were seconded by prayers and tears and alms to the poor. The combination of *Tadbir*, of prayer, of charity—surely the combination of these three—would secure the goal, wrench the prize even from a grudging, unwilling fate? Well, the days passed, and the years rolled on, but Baba Firawn would not give way. Hope and despair fought their fight in his little heart, but optimism was the striking note of his character. He never doubted, never flung the sword aside—he was the despair of his friends, the terror of his enemies. But Allah always hears the prayers of a suppliant, and heals his pain. One fine morning two gorgeously-dressed courtiers of the Shah arrived at Baba Firawn's door, and sought admission to his presence without a moment's delay. They were forthwith ushered into his study, and after formal obeisance they handed over to him the Firman of the Shah, duly signed and sealed. It ran thus: His Imperial Majesty commands thee—his slave—whom he has rescued from obscurity and saved from penury—forthwith to assume the Governorship of Tehran. Thy life-long servility to me and my House has secured this great distinction for thee. Despite thy high office thou art bidden to remain, as before, a down-trodden worm, cringing, subservient, *salaming*, without a voice or a will of thy own, so far as His Imperial Majesty is concerned. To others it is open to thee to play the various rôles of a lion, a lamb, an ass, or a jackal."

Forgetting himself in the exuberance of his joy, the otherwise reticent Baba Firawn cut a fine caper before the two royal ambassadors and his own staff. The dance over—he ordered a banquet. The town was lit up, garlanded, decorated with triumphal arches and many-coloured flags. Tehran never looked so supremely sweet—so enticingly beautiful.

The streets were lined with breathless spectators, eager to catch a glimpse of the great Baba Firawn. Precisely at 8.30 p.m. the gun announced his departure from his residence for the Governor's Palace. Not even the Shah had an ovation such as was given to the Acting Governor. His heart swelled with joy, his eyes filled with tears, in broken accents he uttered his "*urbi et orbi.*" In gala dress the palace was ready to receive its new occupant. At the steps he was received by the officials and the notables of Tehran. Amidst rows of admiring Tehranians he slowly walked up—bowing, smiling, waving his hand, gently shaking his head—to the Throne-room. There, amidst the deafening roar of *Masha-ullah, Allah-ho-Akbar, Chashm bud-Dur*, he rose to deliver his *Khutbah* to the assembled people of Tehran. In the midst of cheers and applause, so spontaneous, so irrepressible, so genuine, he began: "I am satisfied that I have at last attained this eminence, and more satisfied still that I shall share it with my dearly beloved *factotum*—Mirza Muftari Beg—the apple of my eye and the pleaser of my soul. I trust I shall soon bind him to myself with a yet more loving and tenderer tie. The Governorship of Tehran has been the haunting dream of my life. I have dreamed of it at my mother's breast, in my nurse's arms, at school, at college; in short, throughout my meteoric career as a devoted servant of His Majesty the Shah. To-day—God be praised!—that dream of mine has been realized. My tearful thanks to the Dispenser of Gifts—the Creator of the Universe!

"The temporal interests of my brethren-in-faith have always been my chief, nay, my only concern in life. I am satisfied that I have strenuously advanced their interests, promoted their welfare, as against the interests of the horrid fire and idol worshippers. Nay, I have not hesitated to sacrifice justice, probity, fairness—ah! *all, all* that is dear to a noble-minded man like myself—to secure, to further the cause of my circumcised tribe. No dog of an unbeliever has had, or will ever have, a chance in my time. I am pledged, body and soul, to the Islamic fraternity, and I shall stand by that pledge to the end of my days. Never has my thought been distracted, diverted from my people. It is my deliberate opinion that in these greedy and grasping times we need a daily newspaper more than anything else; for the daily press alone—so praised by my dear dear Muftari Beg—can

effectively watch over our interests, successfully fight for our cause. Mirza Muftari has unreservedly placed his talents and vast journalistic experience at my command, and has heroically helped me with plans and schemes and devices to carry my purpose through, but alas! the schemes and plans and devices, so carefully woven by us, are still safely imprisoned in our fertile brains, without yielding any tangible or fruitful results. I apprehend naught but failure unless you bestir yourselves, gird up your loins, and, above all, loosen the strings of your bulging purses. I wish I could place for your use my stupendous wealth, but—much against my will—I have to sacrifice public for private interests. My wealth I have irrevocably assigned to my numerous offspring, and from them I cannot, I will not, divert it to any other channel. But apart from this laudable object, for which, if it be necessary, I can appeal to the Holy Qur'an and the sacred traditions of our revered Prophet, I have a terrible horror of spending money. I love to inspect my pass-book each morning, to see how the credit balance has silently swollen during the night. I rejoice at my growing wealth and increasing prosperity. I have eclipsed my forefathers in wealth and my townsfolk in magnanimity. I am satisfied with my public spirit, my philanthropy, my generosity. But to proceed. Next to a daily paper we need fanaticism; for without fanaticism we can neither closely unite nor whole-heartedly strike at our enemies. Fanaticism, then, must be your cherished asset. Cherish it, I implore you; hug it, worship it, never lose sight of it. My example is before you—a shining example unto the end of time.

"I confidently trust that, like me, you too will show no charity or forgiveness to the cursed infidels. Smite them wherever you track them—offer them no quarter—wipe them from this fair Earth. This is the Gospel I deliver unto you—a Gospel which will lead you to success and glory untold, here as well as in the world beyond the grave.

"But I have not yet done with all that I have to say to you. If a daily newspaper and fanaticism are the *sine qua non* of our advancement—hypocrisy, too, is a virtue not to be lightly set aside. It matters nothing what opinion you inwardly hold—for not even the devil knoweth the thoughts of man—but publicly you must swim with the tide, do what the world does, say what the world says. Advocate the glory of five

daily prayers—though you may not say even one a day. Insist on fast for others—though such a renunciation you may yourself never practise, nay, may even despise. Remember Islam forbids wine and liquor. Therefore follow Omar Khayyam's and my advice—drink not in public, but only in the intimate circle of friends. Never, never miss prayers on the 'Id' and the 'Baqrid' day. To sum up: Fanaticism, Hypocrisy, Self-interest—these three cardinal virtues which I have assiduously practised, I heartily commend to you; for assuredly they will lead you to sovereign power.

"With all the earnestness I can command, I promise you that I shall never, even by a hair's breadth, deviate from the spotless rectitude of my life.

"One thing I will not omit to mention. My ambition has not ended with the Acting Governorship of Tehran. I am casting covetous glances at the throne of Bahram! How I would adorn, glorify it! I will excel all its previous occupants —yes, I shall overshadow them all. With my cunning, and your stupidity, even *that* is not impossible of attainment. But whether that goal be reached or not—I intend to skim off the best cream of life—I shall build an enduring monument to myself—I shall become your accredited chief—temporal and spiritual—and I shall defy mortality and oblivion.

"But before I sit down—in the presence of you all—I make one solemn vow. It is to crush, to annihilate the foul-mouthed *Khadim-i-Elahee* and the soul-shattering *Khudabanda*. They have disturbed my night's repose; they have ruffled my hitherto unbroken placidity; they have directed the shafts of their raillery at me; they have ventured to question my sway; they have even dared—cursed dogs—to thwart and oppose me. I swear by Him who holds my precious life in his hand—I swear by Him that they will pay the penalty of their impudence and audacity. May Allah, the merciful, the compassionate, help me in vengeance and retaliation against them! Amen! Amen!"

The speech having ended and been duly acclaimed, the gathering dipersed, full of speculation—full of hope—leaving the new Governor to the administration of his Province and to the use and abuse of his powers.

XXV

THE HINDU–MUSLIM PACT

There soars no summit too sublime
For mortal fools to seek to climb—
No not Olympus steep:
Our sins give angry Jove no time
To let his lightning sleep.

Horace.

THE suggestion of a Hindu-Muslim pact was a singularly felicitous stroke of policy. Thereby the late Mr. C. R. Das hoped, and rightly hoped, to forge a weapon of tremendous force and efficacy. To be sure, no very great wisdom or foresight was needed to see that the only way to bring the bureaucracy to its knees was to command the weight of united public opinion, to count upon the undivided support of the members of the Council; in fine, to marshal the gathering and gathered powers of enlightened Bengal. Mr. C. R. Das was a man of weight. Of his sincerity no clearer or more convincing proof is needed than the fact that he suffered and made enormous personal sacrifices. It was apparent to Mr. Das, as it must be apparent to all of unclouded thought and clear vision, that no single-handed effort of the Hindus, however well-organized, was ever likely to achieve the defeat of the bureaucracy or the establishment of Provincial autonomy. The Muslims could not be ignored or lightly set aside. Hence the suggested pact—the condition precedent to concerted action within and without the Council walls. And what, after all, was the sum and substance of this projected pact? Nothing very uncommon. It meant no surrender of the Hindu position; no abandonment of Hindu claims. It merely purported to concede to the Muslims their just and legitimate dues—a representation in the administration of the country, proportionate to their numerical strength. Policy, justice, need of the hour, expediency—all pointed to the course adopted or suggested by Mr. Das.

Mr. Das held out an olive branch ; pleaded for reconciliation; urged unity of action ; stood out for a united Bengal—unriven by religious feuds, held together by the gentle and kindly spirit of wisdom and fraternity. The Muslims assented heartily—deeming that the things really existed. The experiences of the past—bitter and unsavoury though they were—were flung aside, forgotten. Mr. Das seemed, for the moment, the healer of many festering wounds, the composer of many apparently unadjustable differences, the man of the occasion. But no sooner was the pact or the proposed pact announced than a sky-rending clamour arose, a fierce and bitter strife ensued. From all sides rang stridently vocal shouts—" Down with the pact ; down, down with it."

" The Gods care much," says Tacitus, " for our chastisement ; for our happiness not at all." This, if ever there was one, was a signal instance of divine malice. That which would have brought forth blessings innumerable was suddenly turned into a sign-post of revolt. Round it rallied the enlightened justice-loving Hindus. The very suggestion was offensive, hateful to the majority of Mr. Das's co-religionists. It was naught but abomination in their eyes to think of conceding any rights to Muslims, to deal with them, to treat with them on a basis of political equality. Censure and condemnation were Mr. Das's reward. Mr. Das erred, according to them, betrayed the Hindu cause ; entered into an unholy, unauthorized alliance with the Muslims. All this turmoil and fury ! Why ? Simply because Mr. Das had sought to be just and fair. The beautiful words of Goethe come to my mind as I write : " Dear friend, there needs much courage not to lose courage in this world."

The suggested Hindu-Muslim pact has at last revealed the true position of affairs ; the real and natural attitude of the Hindu mind. Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee whom age, if nothing else, should have mellowed into sweetness and chastened into charity, led the van of Hindu opposition. Two-fold is our debt to Mr. Das ; we are beholden to him for his liberal-mindedness and we are beholden to him, far more, for opening our eyes to the true Hindu feeling and attitude towards us.

The pact is at an end, but this little episode is not without a lesson and a warning. What Swaraj would be like, who can say ? But one thing is beyond doubt—it would be a

paradise where the followers of the Prophet would have no milk or honey. It is idle, then, to look to Swaraj for the cure of our present ills. And equally idle is it to look to it for a reign of right or righteousness. Should it ever come to pass—it will divide Indian humanity into two great unequal halves—clean and unclean—Heaven for one and Hell for the other.

Such then, are the obdurate facts. Shall we face and fight them, or shall we shirk and shrink away from them? Pascal has truly said: "Right, without the resolution to support it, is invalid." The resolution, therefore, to support our right is the resolution that we want in all earnestness. This fact we cannot emphasize too often; for there is only one avenue to success—effort unsparing, effort unceasing, effort desperate. Without hasting, without resting, we must work out our own salvation.

Now, Mr. Mohamed Ali's Presidential address at the Congress is a remarkable document—remarkable for its absolute defiance of facts and actualities. He appeals to the Indian Nation. But where is this Indian Nation to be found?—Nowhere on this fair earth; but perhaps it floats as a dream in those cold Olympian altitudes where he dwells shrouded in mists. Cicero, speaking of Cato, said: "He thinks he is in the Republic of Plato, and not in the mud of Romulus." And my esteemed friend Mohamed too is not in India but in the Republic of Plato. Who can find fault with his rapturous dreams and enticing visions? Not, at least, those who were his contemporaries at Oxford. Placed as we are, unity must be our watchword; perseverance our weapon; God our guide. We need firmness and tact to save ourselves from every semblance of ignominious servitude; nay, from perishing as a people and as a political factor in India.

To Government we owe loyalty and support; but to be sure, not blind loyalty, not indiscriminate support. The old Arab jurists—acute and discerning thinkers—described the relation of the ruler and the ruled as a bilateral compact, founded on mutual rights, duties and obligations. The modern jurists will not disdain to accept and acclaim these views. Let, then, the rights and obligations be marked with mutual love and esteem. But true love and esteem will be shadowy and unsubstantial where intense pride on the one hand and

fierce resentment on the other hold sway. The solution must be sought in a better adjustment of the relations of the ruler and the ruled. And the solution is not impossible.

The Muslim cause, as things stand to-day, is in the safe keeping of none but Muslims themselves. With them it rests to save or wreck it.

May we not say with the poet :—

> " To live with justice, vision, and no hate—
> See without looking : See—but not without
> Giving slow judgment, clemency's last doubt,
> Knowing too well the tyranny of fate—
> To live with justice, vision, and no hate."

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